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HISTORY FROM THE PURĀṆAS

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.H.I.	—	Ancient Historians of India—V. S. Pathak.
A.I.	—	Ancient India—R. C. Majumdar.
A.I.G.	—	Age of Imperial Guptas—R. D. Bannerji.
A.I.H.T. A.H.T.	—	Ancient Indian Historical Tradition—Pargiter.
A.I.K.	—	Age of Imperial Kanauj (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
A.S.	—	Arthaśāstra—Kautilya.
Bhag	—	Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
C.C.G.D.	—	Catalogue of Coins in British Museum of the Gupta Dynasty—John Allan.
C.H.I.	—	Cambridge History of Ancient India.
C.C.I.M.	—	Catalogue of Coins in Indian Museum, Vol. I, Smith.
C.M.I.	—	Coins of Medieval India—Cunningham.
Ch.	—	Chapter.
Ch.	—	Charita (e.g. Navasāhasāṅka Ch.).
Ch. Een.	—	Chambers Encyclopaedia.
C.I.I.	—	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
Cl. A.	—	Classical Age (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan).
Cl. A.	—	Classical Accounts of India—Majumdar.
D.H.N.I.	—	Dynastic History of North India—H. C. Ray.
D.K.A.	—	Dynasties of the Kali Age—Pargiter.
D.K.M. D.M.	—	Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha—Sinha.
Edn.	—	Edition.
E.H.I.	—	Early History of India—V. Smith.
E.I. Ep. Ind.	—	Epigraphic Indica.
Elph.H.I.	—	Elphinston—History of India.
G.P.	—	Gupta Polity—Dikshitar.
Gl.G.D.	—	Glory that was Gurjara Deśa—Munshi.
G.O.S.	—	Gaekwad Oriental Series.

- H.B. — History of Bengal, R. C. Majumdar.
H.C. — Harṣa-Carita.
H.G.D. — History of the Gāhaḍavāla Dynasty.
H.G.P. — History of the Gurjara Pratihāras—Puri.
Hist. Med. Ind. History of Medieval India—Ishwari Prasad.
H.M.H.I. — History of Medieval Hindu India—Vaidya.
H.N.E.I. | — History of North Eastern India—Basak.
H.N.E. |
H.P. — Hindu Polity—Jaiswal.
I.H.I. — Imperial History of India—Jaiswal.
I.H.Q. — Indian Historical Quarterly.
Ind. Ant. — Indian Antiquary.
Ins. — Inscription.
J.A.S.B. — Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.B.B.R.A.S. — Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal.
Asiatic Society.
J.D.L. — Journal of the Department of Letters.
J.U.P.H.S. — Journal of the U. P. Historical Society.
K.M. — Kāvya-mīmāṃsa.
K.S.S. — Kathā Sarita Sāgara.
Med. Ind. — History of Medieval India—Ishwari Prasad.
M.M.K. — Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa.
M.R. — Mudrā Rākṣasa.
M.S.E.D. — Monier Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary.
N.S. — New Series.
N.S.C. — Nava Sāhasāṅka Carita.
P. — Purāṇa (with the name of a Purāṇa).
— Parva (in connection with the Mahābhārata).
p. — page.
Pt. — Part.
P.R.H.R.C. — Purāṇic Records on the Hindu Rites and
Customs—Hazra.
Prab. K. — Prabandha Kośa (Jain work).
P.V. — Purāṇa Vimarśa.
Prabh. Carit — Prabhāvaka Carita.
R.E. — Rock Edicts.

- R.N.W.I. — Memoirs of Races of North-West Province of
India, by Elliot.
- R.T. — Rājatarāṅgiṇī.
- S. Ins. — Select Inscriptions—D. C. Sircar.
- Sk. — Skanda Purāṇa.
- Str. E. — Struggle For Empire (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan).
- St. Ind. Ant. — Studies in Indian Antiquities
—H. C. Ray Chaudhury.
- St. Ind. Hist. — Studies in Indian History and Culture
—U. N. Ghoshal
- St. Sk. | — Studies in Skanda Purāṇa, Part One. —Awasthi
St. Sk. P. |
- St. Up. — Studies in Upa-Purāṇas—Hazra.
- TCNWPO — Tribes and Castes of North-West Province and
Oudh by Elliot.
- T.Y. — Travels of Yuan Chwang—Watters.
- U.R.C. — Uttara Rāma Carita—Bhavabhūti.
- U.S.K. — Udaya Sundarī Kathā—Soḍḍhala.



PREFACE

शुचिर्यो हि नरो नित्यमितिहाससमुच्चयम् ।

शृणुयाद्धर्मकामार्थी स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

HISTORY FROM THE PURĀṆAS

Political history of ancient India contained in the Purāṇas is in the form of genealogical lists of royal dynasties from the earliest times down to the beginning of the Vākāṭaka-Gupta period. For the early history of India before the Mahābhārata war the Purāṇas constitute the main source of information. Scholars like Keith and Macdonell are sceptical about the historical value of the Purāṇas. They doubt the historicity of any event which is not explicitly mentioned in the R̥gveda and condemn the Purāṇic account as "inaccurate."¹ But R̥gveda and other works of the Vedic literature do not actually deal with history ; they contain only religious prayers and philosophical aspirations of ancient India and their historical account consists of merely a few stray references to certain rulers or events. The Purāṇas alone give something like a continuous historical narrative. That is why Pargiter gives more weight to the Purāṇic tradition than to the evidence of the Vedic literature.

Many genuine historical traditions of great antiquity are embodied in the royal genealogies of the Purāṇas and many historical facts of great importance can be detected in the figurative and allegorical descriptions and mythological stories contained in them. Thus, it is true, as Dr. Pusalkar asserts, that "the evidence of the Purāṇas, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out altogether, because despite a good deal of what is untrustworthy

1. Vedic Index, II. p. 187.

in them, they alone contain something like a continuous historical narrative, and it is absurd to suppose that the elaborate royal genealogies were all merely figments of imagination or a tissue of falsehoods."¹

VINCENT A. SMITH

While discussing the sources of the early history of India V. Smith observes : "The most systematic record of Indian historical tradition is that preserved in the dynastic lists of the Purāṇas. Five out of the eighteen works of this class namely Vāyu, Matsya, Viṣṇu, Brahmāṇḍa and Bhāgavata contain such lists. The Brahmāṇḍa and the Vāyu, as well as the Matsya, which has large later additions, appear to be the earliest and most authoritative. Theory required that a Purāṇa should deal with five topics of primary creation, secondary creation, genealogies of gods and patriarchs, reigns of various Manus, and the histories of the old dynasties of kings. The last named of the five topics is the only one which concerns the historian. Modern European writers have been inclined to disparage unduly the authority of the Purāṇic lists, but closer study finds in them much genuine and valuable historical tradition."²

F. E. PARGITER

Pargiter utilised the Purāṇas and his valuable researches are embodied in his works viz., 'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' and 'The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age'. He holds that the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa in its early form was the original from which the Matsya, Vāyu, and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas derived their dynastic lists. "Mr. Pargiter holds that the first compilation of historical matter may have been made in the reign of the Āndhra king, Yajñaśrī, about the end of the second century after Christ ; that the first certain compilation was made in original Bhaviṣya Purāṇa about A. D. 260 ; that the Bhaviṣya account was revised about A. D. 315-20 and the same account was again revised a few years later, about A. D. 325-30....."³ Thus it goes

1. Vedic Age, p. 305.

2. E. H. I., pp. 11-12.

3. Ibid., p. 24.

to the credit of Pargiter to discuss the historical value of the Purāṇas. In his *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Pargiter has discussed the different genealogical lists. The Purāṇa text of the Dynasties of Kali Age discussed the historical dynasties that ruled over different parts of the country from 600 B. C. to about the beginning of the fourth century A. D.

E. J. RAPSON

Prof. Rapson (C.H.I., Vol. I) also discussed the historical tradition embodied in the Purāṇas with the help of Buddhist and Jain sources.¹

Dr. A. D. Pusalkar also discussed the Purāṇic genealogies in the work, styled *Vedic Age*², where he has discussed the comparative value of the Purāṇas as sources of traditional history³.

The works of V. R. R. Dikshitar ²(Some Aspects of the Vāyu Purāṇa and the Matsya Purāṇa, as well as Purāṇa Index—3 Volumes) and R. C. Hazra (Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, Studies in the Upanishads—2 Vols.) are important and valuable. But the political history is totally neglected there. Dr. Hazra's *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* is 'devoted mainly to determine the chronology of the Purāṇic chapters.....'. It consists of two parts. Part I deals with the chronology of the Purāṇic chapters and Part II discusses the "Hindu Society before 200 A. D. and from 3rd. to the 6th. century A. D". He has referred to the appearance of Muhammadans⁴ in the above mentioned work; but he is not concerned⁵ with the impact of these foreigners on the history, politics and society of the early medieval India. Hazra holds even the Maurya monarchs to be Śūdras.⁶ It is untenable.

1. CHI., Vol. 1, Chap. XIII, pp. 274-284.

2. *Vedic Age*, pp. 267-329.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 304-311.

4. P.R.H.R.C., pp. 19, 114, 118, 120, 124.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

The works of D. R. Patil (Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa) and S. G. Kantawala (Cultural History from the Matsya Purāṇa) as well as the works of V. S. Agrawal (Matsya Purāṇa A Study, Vāmana Purāṇa A Study, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa Eka Adhayayna), S. D. Gyani (Agni Purāṇa A Study), S. N. Roy (Paurāṇic Dharma evaṁ Samāja) and Pathaka (Viṣṇu Purāṇa Kā Bhārata) throw much light on the cultural history of ancient India. I tried to discuss the historical importance of the Skanda Purāṇa as a valuable source of North Indian History as well as for the history of the Pallavas, Colas and Pāṇḍyas in 'the Studies in the Skanda Purāṇa (Part I)'. Historical genealogies were also discussed in my Garuḍa Purāṇa (Eka Adhyayana).

However, the work done so far on the Purāṇic studies is very scanty and requires more attention of the scholars towards it. There are still some Purāṇas which have not been studied at all or have been studied only superficially. As such, even the Varāha Purāṇa, which is believed to be a manual of religious prayers by Wilson, Winternitz and Hazra contains valuable historical information.¹

The dynastic lists and historical facts regarding the royal dynasties after the Mahābhārata war preserved in the Purāṇas are corroborated by the epigraphic, numismatic and literary sources—foreign and indigenous. The historical facts occurring in the Buddhist and Jain literature and accounts of Greek and Chinese literature bear testimony to the historicity of the Purāṇic genealogies. Epigraphic records, coins and seals of many kings of the Purāṇic lists, after the Mahābhārata war, have been unearthed during the last three centuries. Thus the historical traditions preserved in the Purāṇas are not altogether without foundation. In fact much of the Purāṇic account "is a genuine chronicle of persons if not of occurrences".²

Paṇḍita Baladeva Upādhyāya has also discussed Paurāṇic

1. Studies in the Varāha Purāṇa, Chapter II.

Ibid., pp. 66-70.

2. Wilson, Vishṇu P. Preface, p. LXIV.

genealogies in his work, *Purāṇa Vimarśa*.¹

Dr. P. L. Bhargava has also discussed the Purāṇic genealogies² and has proved therein that the genealogical account preserved in the Purāṇas agrees in every way with the evidence supplied by the Vedic literature."³

Dr. R. Morton Smith has developed the work of Pargiter in his work — *Dates and Dynasties in Earliest India*. Thus the importance of the Purāṇas for the study of Ancient Indian History is evident. Dr. Smith has utilised the archaeological data to substantiate the Purāṇic statements.

The accounts relating to the historical dynasties viz., Śaiśu-nāgas, Nandas, Mauryas, Śūngas, Kāṇvāyanas, Andhras and 'various local dynasties take the thread of history upto the early fourth century of the Christian era i. e. upto the reign of the Candragupta I of the Gupta dynasty. Dr. Smith has discussed the dates upto the rulers of the Andhra dynasty. Most of the dates assigned to the rulers of these historical dynasties are already known from the works of V. A. Smith, D. R. Bhandarkar, H. C. Raychaudhuri, Rapson, Rhys Davids, and others.

At present, we are concerned here only with the PostGupta history of ancient India.

Pargiter held that the Bhaviṣya was the first Purāṇa to give an account of the dynasties of the Kali age, and the Matsya, Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa got their accounts from it.....Such accounts were composed in or near Magadha more particularly, which was one of the chief centres of political life and thought during those times about seven centuries B. C. after writing was introduced into India."⁴ Pargiter holds, like other western scholars, that art of writing was introduced into India about 7th century B. C. and repeatedly Pargiter refers to the Hindus' lack of the historical sense."⁵

1. PV., pp. 351-397.

2. India in the Vedic Age, Chapter IV.

3. Ibid., p. 88.

4. D.K.A., Introduction, pp. XXVI—XXVII; cf. A.I.H.T., p. 54.

5. A.I.H.T., pp. 67, 74, 96, etc.

Dr. Morton Smith devoted about 338 pages of his valuable book (*Dates and Dynasties in Earliest India*) to the traditional history and about 48 pages to the historical dynasties.

As regards the chronology of the historical dynasties, Dr. Smith did not study the historical gleanings from the Skanda Purāṇa where I had discussed the dates of Vikramāditya, Śūdraka, Nandarājya and Budha (Gupta).¹

It is not fair to say that in the past Brāhmaṇas or Hindus lacked historical sense. We lack it today, most of the Indian scholars rely upon Pargiter and they have not cared to assess the 'Itihāsa-samuccayaṁ' given in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa. Its text is faulty and corrupt; but it exhibits its historical interest in describing the old dynasties which ruled in the different parts of the country. It tells us that Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and even Śūdras had been ruling over the different parts of the country.² It refers to Śiśunāga, Kākavarṇa, Kṣatraujas, Vedamīśra (=Bimbisāra), Ajātaripu (=Ajātaśatru), Darbhaka (Darśaka), Udayāśva (Udāyin), Nandavardhana, Nandasuta, Priyānanda, Devānanda, Yajñabhaṅga, Mauryānanda, Mahānanda, Gautama-Śākyamuni (founder of Buddhism), Śuddhodana, Śākyasimha, Buddhasimha, Candragupta, Bindusāra, and Aśoka.³ Then the thread of history takes us to Kānyakubja and then to the four Rājapūta dynasties of Paramāra (Pramara), Capahāni (Cāhamāna), Parihāra (Pratihāra) and the fourth dynasty of Cālukya (which is not mentioned here). It refers to the destruction of Buddhists.⁵ Thus we get an outline of history and references to historical and cultural events like the decline of Buddhism in the so called Rājapūta Period. But the historians of Ancient India, particularly those who have devoted themselves to the Purāṇic studies, did not care to unravel history from this corrupt text.

The Skanda Purāṇa, an important work in its class, has been

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1. St. Sk. Part I, pp. 178-184.
 2. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga Parva, III. 4. 27.
 3. Ibid., III. 6. 26-44.
 4. Ibid., III. 6. 45-47.
 5. Ibid., III. 6. 48.

totally neglected because of its voluminous size. It throws valuable light not only on the history of the Nandas, and the Guptās, but it also throws valuable light on the history of Madhyadeśa after the reign of the Kushāṇa king Vāsudeva, the so called one of the darkest periods of her history, to the rise of the Imperial Guptas.

Some misconceptions have taken deep roots in the minds of the Purāṇic investigators who hold that account of the future kings seem to stop with the Imperial Guptas and their contemporaries. This notion still persists that no important dynasty or monarch of India has been mentioned in the Purāṇas. Hence I felt an urge to explore the Purāṇārṇava and the following pages reveal the results of my venture.

History of Śaśāṅka particularly the coins of Śaśāṅka with Soma and Someśvara—Vṛṣāsanah—depicting Jayābhiṣeka have been discussed here for the first time.

While dealing with Sanskrit literature Dr. Brough observes : "The old epics and Purāṇic legends grew up in part at the courts of kings, where they were recited by professional bards or minstrels known as Sūtas. But it is also clear that they were never wholly divorced from the popular audiences of the villages, who have always listened with eager attention while the wandering story-teller or one of their own learned elders recited the old tales"¹. "The present form of the Purāṇas, and still more the Upapurāṇas, probably represents the work of temple-priests eager to glorify the god whom they served, and to attract worshippers to his shrine"². "The Vāyu and Padma Purāṇas tell us how ancient genealogies, tales and ballads were preserved by the sūtas and they describe the Sūta's duty.....The Vāyu (I. 31-2) says— "The sūta's special duty as perceived by goodmen of old was to preserve the genealogies of gods, ṛshis and most glorious kings, and the traditions of greatmen..... The Padma (V. I. 27-8) says "This is the sūta's duty from primaeval time.....to compose

1. Ch. En., Vol. XII. p. 206.

2. Ibid., Vol. XI. p. 378.

the genealogies of gods, ṛshis and most glorious kings and the eulogies of greatmen.....”¹.

Mahābhārata also refers to the appointment of Sūta as a minister well-versed in the Purāṇas and gifted with the eight virtues². He was a member of the royal cabinet comprising eight ministers³. Thus the references to glorious kings (rājñām chāmīta tejasām, Vāyu. I. 31; rājñām amita tejasām, Padma, V. 1. 27) like Śaśāṅka, Vikramaśīla, Āma (Nāgabhata II). Bhoja and Kāśīrāja Chandradeva, reflects the redaction of the Purāṇas by Sūtas in the royal courts to which were attached. Hence the Purāṇas did not cease their interest in the post-Gupta history of Ancient India. The Sūtas were anxious to find out the causes of the Turkish occupation of the country⁴.

Viṣṇudharmottara (Khaṇḍ I, Chap. 74) gives us an analysis of our national decay by describing the condition of Bhāratavarṣa in the ‘Kṣīṇa-yuga’. It refers to struggle between kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas. The latter were assisted by Vaiśyas and Śūdras in their struggle against the former. It is here in this context that the Viṣṇudharmottara refers to ‘Śaśāṅkaṁ dvijeśam Somaṁ’ or Rājā Soma, who is the same as Śaśāṅka, the celebrated king of Gauḍa. We also find here references to Śūra and Pramiti, the defender of faith in the Madhyadeśa. The former seems to be the founder or Śūra-Vamśa. Pramiti, an important ruler of Ancient India, is mentioned in the Vāyu, Matsya, Brahmāṇḍa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Skanda and Viṣṇudharmottara. His account could not escape the notice of the eminent Indologist, Dr. V. S. Agrawal, who identified Pramiti with Candragupta II Vikramāditya. Present studies prove that the Purāṇas took keen interest in the history of the Hindu Medieval India.

1. A.H.T., p. 15.

2. Śānti P., LXXXV. 9(i) : अष्टामिषवर्गैर्युक्तं सूतं पौराणिकं तथा ।

3. Ibid., LXXXV. 11.

4. Skanda P., V. iii. 5. 14.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Collapse of the Gupta Empire was followed by the rapid disintegration of the entire political system. The vast well-knit empire was turned into the forces of disintegrating units—the petty warring states. It led to the epoch of anarchy marked by the conflicts between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. The Mahābhārata asserts that friendship between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas leads to the happiness of the subjects¹. If they do not respect each other, destruction would befall the people².

To justify the truth of this statement an old story about the discourse between Aila's son and Kaśyapa is recited. Aila's son exclaimed : "When the Brāhmaṇa forsakes the Kṣatriya or the Kṣatriya forsakes the Brāhmaṇa, who amongst them should be considered superior, and upon whom would the other orders depend and maintain themselves ? Kaśyapa replied :—

"Ruin befalls the kingdom of the Kṣatriya when the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya fight against each other. The robbers attack that kingdom in which anarchy reigns and all goodmen regard the king as a Mleccha³. Mutual rivalry between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas causes unbearable distress to the people⁴.

The Brāhmaṇa contributes to the advancement of the Kṣatriyas, and the Kṣatriya leads to that of the Brāhmaṇas⁵.

1. Śānti P., LXXIII. 4 (ii) : ब्रह्मक्षत्रस्य सम्मानात् प्रजा सुखमवाप्नुयात् ।

2. Ibid., LXXIII. 5 (i) : विमाननात् तयोरेव प्रजा नश्येयुरेव हि ।

3. Ibid., LXXIII. 7-8.

M. N. Dutt, (Śānti Parva, English Translation, LXXIII. 8) refers to Mleccha.

4. Śānti P., LXXIII. 28 (i-ii) : मिथोभेदाद् ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियाणां ।

प्रजा दुःखं दुःसहं चाविशन्ति ॥

5. Ibid., LXXIII. 32 (i) : ब्रह्म वर्धयति क्षत्रं क्षत्रतो ब्रह्म वर्धते ।

The next chapter (Śānti Parva, LXXIV) comprising a discourse between Mucukunda and Vaiśravaṇa also upholds the importance of concord and co-operation among the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas. It asserts: "If their energies are exercised separately, they would never be able to keep up the world."¹

These ideals of unity were upheld in the Gupta age. Samudragupta was asked to protect the entire earth (pāhyevam-urvīm-iti)². He became a 'prasara-dharaṇi-bandhaḥ',³ as well as Dharma-prācīra-bandhaḥ⁴.

After conquering this earth, he strove to conquer the 'Indraloka' or Svarga by his virtuous deeds⁵. These ideals of the Gupta kingship were predominant throughout the golden period of the Gupta age and even after it. The inscriptions and coins present some close parallelism with this epic-ideal of an exalted sovereignty based on the following points:—

- (i) Ideal of the conquests of two worlds—here and beyond:

मुचुकुन्दो विजित्येमां पृथिवीं पृथिवीपतिः ।

जिज्ञासमानः स्वबलमभ्ययादलकाधिपम् ॥ Śānti P., LXXIV. 4.

- (ii) Ideal of an all-India Government:—

प्रशाधि कृत्स्नां मद्भक्तमखिलामिमाम् । Śānti P., LXXIV. 17 (i).

- (iii) Attainment of sovereignty by means of valour:—

बाहुवीर्याजितं राज्यं । Śānti P., LXXIV. 18.

- (iv) Attainment of fame and glory based on the conquest of the earth which was unconquered before and it was based on the king's devotion to (sva) dharma (i. e.) kṣātra-dharma, (cf. Śānti Parva, LXXIV. 19) as well as to Brāhmaṇas:—

1. Śānti Parva., LXXIV. 13.

2. Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, line 8.

3. Ibid., line 24.

4. Ibid., line 15.

5. Ibid., lines 29-30,

cf. the Coin-legends on the obverse sides of Kāca type, Standard type, Archer type, & Aśvamedha type etc.

एवं यो धर्मविद् राजा ब्रह्मपूर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
जयत्यविजितामुर्वी यशश्च महदश्नुते ॥

Śānti P., LXXIV. 21

Brahmanism had ceased to be predominant religion after the fall of the Śuṅgas. But "with the consolidation of the power of the Imperial Guptas in Northern India the situation changes at once. The majority of records discovered upto date are Brahmanical and not Jain or Buddhist. It cannot be denied for a moment that State patronage went to Brāhmaṇas only, though there is no direct evidence to prove this statement. The indirect evidence is to be found in the five Damodarpur and the four Faridpur plates, all of which refer to the settlements of land on Hindu Gods or Brāhmaṇas"¹.

Fa-hien also noticed the decline of Buddhism and the rise of flourishing nature of Brahmanism². Despite their leanings towards Brahmanism, Gupta rulers were tolerant towards Buddhism and Jainism. Prof. R. D. Banerji observes that "They are clearly different from the Vardhanas of Thanesar in this respect"³. While commenting on the religious Assembly at Kanauj organised by Harṣa, Dr. Mookerji observes : "It was also on that occasion that Harṣa unfortunately exhibited some amount of bigotry and intolerance not in keeping with the general tenor of his policy and administration, or the wide-hearted charity that distinguished him as a man. At that Assembly, as we have already seen, the emperor cast a slur on the Brahminical religion in many ways.....The king's intolerant attitude at the Assembly was answered by a plot on his own life designed by Brahmins who were in revolt....."⁴. Similarly his contemporary ruler of East India, Śaśāṅka is known as 'the enemy and oppressor of Buddhism'⁵. Thus we notice the social and religious tension based on mutual rivalry.

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1. R. D. Banerji, A.I.G., pp. 113-114.
 2. Dikshitar, G.P., p. 201; J. Legge, Fa-hien Travels, p. 113 ; cf. Gupta Polity, p. 331.
 3. A.I.G., p. 102.
 4. R.K. Mookerji, Harsha , pp. 143-144.
 5. Watters 'On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (1961), II, p. 115

The Viṣṇudharmottaram, which represents this epoch of Indian history, also refers to fierce fight between Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas which led to decline and disaster in Bhāratavarṣa¹. Dr. Ishvari Prasada asserts that "The remarks of Alberuni about the high character of the Hindus are corroborated by an other Arab traveler, Al-Idrisi..... But India immersed in philosophy and bent upon a separatist policy was sure to fall an easy prey to foreign invaders....."². Different attempts were made to establish unity in the country. The thinkers suggested different remedies to cure the nation suffering from the political, social and religious ills. But before the emergence of the national forces of integration, the Turkish avalanche engulfed the sacred country. Pratihāras and Candellas made a bold bid to present a concerted and stable state to avert the national calamity. But time and fate had their way through the faults of the nation. It is aptly portrayed by the Hindu thinkers as Kali-age. Aho ! kālasya citratā.

The Gupta empire during the closing years of the reign of Kumāragupta I fell on evil days and his death sounded the death-knell of the dynasty, though Skandagupta saved it awhile from disruption and extinction. The internal dissension and external invasions sapped the vitality of the Gupta Empire. There seems to be a war of succession among the Gupta-princes after the death of Kumāragupta I (cf. vyapetya sarvān manuḥjendra-putrān lakṣmī svayam yaṁ varayāñcakāra, Junagarh Rock Inscription, verse 5).

The Skanda Purāṇa refers to a Magadhan ruler Budha, whose epoch comes to 498 A.D. He is stated to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the defender of faith (dharma-pātā). He is credited to have accomplished notable deeds. One of such great achievements was his victory over violent and fierce people styled Jyotirbindu-mukhās, who caused terror in Magadha. They were the Hūṇas, who are mentioned in the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta as Mlecchas. Mleccha-mukha is a synonym of copper. Hence Jyotirbindu-mukhas or the coppery-faces resembling the lustrous spark of the Sun or fire (jyotirbindu) corresponds to

1. Viṣṇudharmottaram I, Chap., LXXIV.

2. Hist. Med. Ind. (Allahabad, 1945), p. XXXII.

Hūṇas.¹ Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa ruler, is equated to the Sun resembling the colour of gold purified by fire.²

We also know that the Gupta empire was devastated by the Hūṇas after the death of Skandagupta. Budhagupta, again, appeared like Viṣṇu to save the country. Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa also seems to recognise the exalted sovereignty of Budhagupta³. Dr. Jayaswal holds that "Budhagupta's reign closes about 500 A. D. The disruption of the Gupta Empire follows his death".⁴ The Eran Pillar Inscription of Budhagupta (165 G.E. = dated 484-85 A.D.) shows the hold of the Guptas in that region about this time. Eran Inscription of Bhānugupta and Goparāja (191 G.E. = 510 A.D.) probably refers to Hūṇa war in this region. Eran Stone Boar Inscription of Toramāṇa dated in the regnal year one of Toramāṇa shows that Airikiṇa Viṣaya had now passed into the hands of the Hūṇas. Taking these three inscriptions in view, we learn that in this region Gupta rulers had to measure swords with the violent Hūṇas, who were vanquished by Budha (Gupta) about 498 A.D.⁵

Budhagupta was succeeded by Bhānugupta, whose inscription had been found at Eran. After the death of Budhagupta, Toramāṇa defeated and forced Dhanyaviṣṇu to acknowledge his suzerainty. Hence Bhānugupta rushed to Eran with his feudatory Goparāja to its rescue. Goparāja died in the lap of victory. It is evident that Mahārāja Bhānugupta was victorious against the Hūṇa leader.

The Eran Pillar Inscription of Bhānugupta and Goparāja proclaims the heroic character and the valarious deeds of Bhānu-

1. St. Sk. P., Pt. I, pp. 183-184.

2. Gwalior Stone Inscription of Mihirakula of year 15, verse 2.

3. I.H.I., pp. 38-39 ; Dr. Jayaswal observes that "The MMK. gives him the popular and well-known (viśruta) name 'U'. Prakāśāditya's coins bear the initial U. below the king's picture. Thus the MMK's king 'His Majesty' (Śrīmān) U. is the Prakāśāditya of the coin".

4. Ibid., p. 39.

5. St. Sk. P., Pt. I., p. 183-184.

gupta. Dr. R. C. Majumdar holds, that "The small pillar now worshipped as a Śiva-līṅga on which the record is engraved may thus be regarded as a memorial Satī-pillar (V.G.A., p. 175)". But it seems to be a victory-pillar (jayastambha), which should proclaim the deeds of victors. Such pillars of victory commemorating the glorious achievements of the conquerors were set up in the battle-field¹. Thus the Eran pillar of Bhānugupta marks the battle-field upholding the glorious traditions of victory associated with the great Gupta rulers. But it marks the close of an epoch characterised by 'Prasara-dharaṇi-bandhaḥ' (i.e. the age of unity).

The epoch of Kali—the age of conflicts, disunion, disruption and disorganisation—begins. Kings of Kāmarūpa threw off the yoke of the Guptas. They fought with their neighbours, the Gauḍas who were enemies of the Maukharis. Gauḍas had friendly relations with the Later Guptas. Vardhanas and Maukharis became friends. Kāmarūpa ruler sought alliance with Harṣa. The friendship between Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman ultimately resulted in the suppression of the Gauḍas². Thus the political system of the post-Gupta period was marked by factious politics, which led to internecine warfare. It all happened when the Arab invaders were knocking at the door.

The Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ, too, like the other texts of the class, sketches the age of decline (styled Kali-age) in Bhāratavarṣa. It refers to fierce fight between Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas, which led to crisis (Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ, Khaṇḍa I, Chap. LXXIV). Brāhmaṇas defeated by the Kṣatriyas went to Śaśāṅka, champion of the Brāhmaṇas. There are references to Śūra and Pramiti, who stood as the champions of Āryāvarta (Viṣṇudha. I. ch. 74.). The "Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ according to several eminent authorities originally formed a portion of the Garuḍa Purāṇa"³. Chap. 215 of the Garuḍa Purāṇa (Section I)⁴ contains identical account of

1. Skanda, I. ii. 35.2-3

2. I.H.Q. XXVI, No. 3, Sept., 1950, pp. 241-246.

3. M.N. Dutt., Preface, p.i (English Translation of the Garuḍa Purāṇa, Calcutta, 1908).

4. Garuḍa P., I. 215. 6-9.

Yugadharma with allusions to struggle between Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas. It also refers to Śūra. Modern scholars took no notice of such glorious kings, whose accounts have been furnished by the Sūtas attached to the royal courts. The accounts of Śaśāṅka and Pramiti found in the different Purāṇic texts are based on the reliable historical traditions followed by the Sūtas.¹

Thus an attempt has been made here to focus important light on the post-Gupta history based on the Purāṇic studies.

In addition to the varṇśānucarita (account of the royal dynasties of the past) which is one of the five characteristic features (Pañca-lakṣaṇas) of the Purāṇas, we also find that the Purāṇas deal with the glorification of the pious rulers of great celebrity :

देवानां च मुनीनां च भूपानां महात्मनाम् ॥

महिमा श्रूयते लोके पुराणेषु सहस्रशः ॥²

As such, it is not surprising to find the accounts of glorious kings like Śaśāṅka (Soma), Vikramaśīla (Dharmapāla), Āma (Nāga-bhata II), Mihira-Bhoja, Pramiti (Dhaṅga) and kṣīrāja Candradeve. The Purāṇas also throw valuable light on the Turkish conquest of India.³

1. A.H.I., pp. 16-17.

Dr. V. S. Pathak discusses, here, the legacy of the Sūtas in the development of the historical traditions. He holds that the Sūta was one of the most important court-officials credited with the composition and preservation of royal genealogies.

2. Skanda, II. vii. 19. 70 (ii)—71 (i)

3. J. U. P. H. S., vol. IX (N. S.), 1961, Pt. 2, pp 55—66 ; vol. x (1962), Pt. II, pp. 139-142.

CHAPTER II

PURĀṆAS AS THE SOURCE OF
POST-GUPTA HISTORY

While dealing with the chronology of the Purāṇic chapters, Dr. Hazra discusses the constitution of the Skanda Purāṇa divided into different khaṇḍas (sections) and upa-khaṇḍas (sub-sections). He concludes: "The above information regarding the different khaṇḍas of the present Skanda show that at least some of these khaṇḍas contain Smṛti-chapters which are fairly old. For instance, the Puruṣottama-kṣetra-māhātmya contains chapters which must be dated earlier than 1300 A.D. ; Kāśī-khaṇḍa has chapters (especially 1, 4, 35 & 38) which are older than 1300 A.D. ; the Revā-khaṇḍa contains chapters (especially Chap. 159) which are earlier than 1300 A.D. ; the Nāgara-khaṇḍa contains chapters (especially chaps. 177, 178, 215-222 and 266) which are earlier than 1200 A.D. ; and the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa has chapters of which some (especially chaps. 19, 205-207 & 336 of Prabhāsa-kh. i) are earlier than 1050 A.D."

"As to the upper limit of the date of the present Skanda, it can be said that there seems to be little in it which can be dated earlier than 700 A.D. At least, the frequent Tāntric traces tend to create such an impression". Dr. Hazra concludes his observations on the chronology of the Skanda Purāṇa with the remarks: "Though the present Skanda is merely a part of the bigger one, it is by no means a small work. So, for want of sufficient space a detailed analysis of its contents has not been attempted here"¹. This oceanic text of the Skanda Purāṇa gives very important information relating to the different epochs of Ancient Indian History. The Skanda Purāṇa makes valuable contribution to the political system, and social organisation of the early medieval India².

1. PRHRC., pp. 165-66.

2. A.B.L. Awasthi, Studies in Skanda Purāṇa—Part I. Chap. II-IV

Study of the Skanda Purāṇa belies the statement that the custom of recording new dynastic history ceased with the early Guptas, after whom no important dynasty or monarch of India has been mentioned or described in the Purāṇas. This proves that from the Gupta period the Purāṇic tradition took, in practice, a new trend which culminated in turning the Purāṇas into books of myths and legends and Smṛti topics with highly imperfect and sometimes forged, genealogical lists¹. It was pointed out, as early as 1929, by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri that the Vastrāpatha-kṣetra Māhātmya refers to the abdication of Bhoja², and it engaged the attention of Dr. R. S. Tripathi³ and Dr. B. N. Puri⁴ who further discussed the point. It is surprising that the scholars failed to take notice of Bhoja, one of the most remarkable personality of the early medieval India. Skanda also refers to Kāśīrāja Candradeva who is none else than the Gaḥadawāla ruler of Kanauj. Similarly the Magadhan ruler named Budha, who is stated to be the saviour of Madhyadeśa against the onslaughts of the 'Jyotirbindumukhas' (= Mlecchas), seems to be the Gupta emperor, Budhagupta⁵. Pramiti is eulogised, in almost identical tone, as the saviour of Madhyadeśa, in different Purāṇic works viz., Matsya, Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa, Skanda, as well as in the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ. Dr. V. S. Agrawal discussed, at length, the personality of Pramiti identifying him with Candragupta II. Skanda also mentions Āma, as a ruler of Kanauj. He has been identified with Yaśovarman or his son by some and with Nāgabhaṭa II by others. In addition to these well-known monarchs of Ancient Indian annals, we get a reference to king (rājā) Rājavaradhana (or Rājyavaradhana) devoted to the worship of the Sun (Sk., I.ii.43.14). We know that Rājyavaradhana, son of Naravaradhana, was a great devotee of the Sun (parṁādityabhakto mahārāja Śrī Rājyavar-

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1. St. Up., Vol. I, p. 26, foot-note 66.
 2. Studies in Indian Antiquities (Calcutta, 1958), pp.150-155.
I.H.Q. (1929), pp.129-133.
 3. T.H.K., pp.245-246.
 4. H.G.P., pp. 58-59 ; 65.
 5. St. Sk., Part I, pp. 183-184

dhanas)¹. It seems that the two rulers mentioned in the Skanda Purāṇa and the Banskhera Copper Plate Inscription are identical. It was the exalted character of the king's devotion to the Sun, which led the Skanda Purāṇa to uphold the 'Sūrya-bhakti' of Rājavaradhana (= Rajyavardhana). The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa also refers to him.

The Chapter 74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaram (Khaṇḍa I) is also very important for the reconstruction of Indian history. While mentioning some of the most striking points relating to Chap. 74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaram, Dr. Hazra says : "Chap. 74—condition of Bhāratavarṣa at the end of each Yuga ; and Viṣṇu's appearance in human forms (such as those of Pramiti, Bhīmaratha, Vāsudeva and Arjuna and Kalkin) for relieving the earth of her burden. This chapter gives us information regarding the literary activity of Vālmīki and Vyāsa..."². The said chapter specifically, refers to the 'avasthā' (critical state)³ of Bhāratavarṣa in its age of decline and decay (Bhāratevarṣe parikṣiṇe yuge).⁴ Mārkaṇḍeya, the celebrated sage, ascribes the social degeneration to the (mutual) wars⁵. At the end of the Kṛta yuga there arose a fierce fight between Kṣatriyas as well as Brāhmaṇas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras ; and the three varṇas were vanquished by the Kṣatriyas in the battle. The Brāhmaṇas asked the Kṣatriyas, as to, how the latter despite their small numbers, defeated the former.⁶ The Kṣatriyas replied that they were led by a single commander of the army, well-versed in all the śāstras and astras (weapons of war),

1. Banskhera Copper Plate Inscription of Harṣa, line 1.

2. St. Up., Vol. I, p.161.

3. Apte, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, (Delhi, 1959), p.62. Avasthā in its general sense does mean state or condition. But in the context of the parikṣiṇa Yuga, its meaning as critical state seems to be most appropriate.

4. V. Dh., I. 74.2.

5. Ibid., I.74.3 : युगे युगे परिक्षीणे वर्षे यादव भारते ।

संग्रामेण विनश्यन्ति प्रायो वर्णोत्तमा जनाः ॥

6. Ibid., I. 74.5-7.

with firm faith in his leadership¹. On the other hand the Brāhmaṇas met the disaster at every step due to their differences of thought, though they swelled in numbers². The Brāhmaṇas, then, went to the refuge of Śaśāṅka styled 'dvijeśa' and 'Soma' :

क्षत्रियैरेवमुक्तास्ते ब्राह्मणास्संशितव्रताः ।

शशांकं शरणं जग्मुर्द्विजेशं सोममञ्जसा ॥³

The pious king named Soma directed the Brāhmaṇas to go to Prayāga where lived a Bhārgava-Brāhmaṇa famous for his learning and conduct. His son named Pramati was skilled in all the śāstras with proficiency in the Dhanurveda representing the Lord Viṣṇu. They were to appoint him their leader, who would accomplish their task by destroying, in battle, all the Kṣatriyas engaged in transgressing the law. Thus Pramati is aptly styled the most exalted supporter of Dharma⁴. The account further takes us from this stage to the end of the Kali-age, when Kalki is stated to be the destroyer of the Mlecchas⁵.

The whole account throws very important light on the political and cultural history of ancient India, with special reference to the following points :—

1. V. Dh., I. 74.8 : एकोऽस्माकं द्विजश्रेष्ठस्सेनानीरिति विश्रुतः ।
सर्वशस्त्रास्त्रकुशलो वयं तस्य मते स्थिताः ॥
2. Ibid., I. 74.9 : भवतां बहुचित्तत्वाद्द्वयं तस्मात्पदे पदे ।
जयामो विपुलं सैन्यं नात्र कार्या विचारणा ॥
3. Ibid., I. 74.10.
4. Ibid., I. 74.11-14 : स तानुवाच धर्मात्मा सोमो राजा द्विजोत्तमान् ।
प्रयागे भार्गवो विद्वान्ब्राह्मणस्संशित व्रतः ॥ ११ ॥
शूर इत्येव विख्यातो नित्यं वसति धार्मिकः ।
प्रमर्तिनाम तस्यास्ति पुत्रो धर्मभृतां वरः ॥ १२ ॥
सर्वशास्त्रार्थकुशलो धनुर्वेद परायणः ।
विष्णुर्मानुष्यमापन्नो युष्मत्कार्यार्थसिद्धये ॥ १३ ॥
कृत्वा सेना प्रणेतारं तं तु कृष्णाजिनध्वजम् ।
निर्मर्यादान्रणे सर्वान्क्षत्रियांस्तान्विजेष्यथ ॥ १४ ॥
5. Ibid., I. 74.15-40.

- (i) Śaśāṅka as the champion of the Brāhmaṇas and Brahmanical culture.
- (ii) Personality and achievements of Pramati—the hero of Madhyadeśa.
- (iii) The glory of Vaiṣṇava-dharma with special reference to Rāma-cult (V. Dh., I. 74-38-39.
- (iv) Lastly, the nature of the Kali-age—the deluge.

CHAPTER III

RĀJYAVARDHANA

Though the Skanda Purāṇa does not contain dynastic lists of the ancient kings, yet it makes stray and incidental references to a few important kings of ancient India. King Rājyavardhana is stated to be a great devotee of the Sun¹. We know that Rājyavardhana (I), son of Naravardhana (and grandfather of Prabhākaravardhana) was also an exalted devotee of the Sun (Paramāditya-bhakto mahārāja Śrī Rājyavardhanas)². It seems that the two royal devotees of the Sun are one and the same. It was the celebrity of the king's devotion to the Bhagavān Bhānu that led the Purāṇic writers to uphold the 'Sūrya-bhakti' of the king Rājyavardhana (= Rājyavardhana).

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa³, however, gives an elaborate account of the reign of Rājyavardhana, a pious ruler and a devout worshipper of the Sun.

While glorifying the Sun, the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa refers to king Rājyavardhana. He was a famous ruler who was devoted to the protection of his country and his people. No portent visited them, nor sickness, nor the fear that comes from serpents, nor was there fear of drought there, while Rājyavardhana was king. He offered up great sacrifices, and gave gifts to those who asked. He was a learned king who had studied all the Vedas. Thus he was an exalted king devoted to piety and protection of his country⁴.

With the advent of the old age, he felt the urge of Kāla (Death). Hence he wanted to abdicate the throne in favour of

1. Skanda, I.ii.43.14.

cf. Mārkaṇḍeya (Jivanand Edn., Calcutta, 1889),

CX : 36 (i).

2. Banskhera Copper Plate Inscription of Harṣa, line 1.

Madhuban Copper Plate Ins. of Harṣa, l. 1

3. Mārkaṇḍeya, (S. V. Press, Bombay Edn.), Ch. CV

4. Mārkaṇḍeya, CVI. 4-9, 19-20.

his son for retiring to the forest in his old age¹. But his people and subordinate princes requested the king Rājyavardhana not to resort to the forest, as it would cause suffering to the whole people. Thus the citizens and his feudatory kings dissuaded him not to abdicate. The people and ministers appealed to him, and appealed again and again, but all in vain. Rājyavardhana did not give up his determination to take up his abode in the forest².

Then, all the people—his dependants and the citizens—propitiated the Sun by performing many religious rites in the forest of Kāmarūpa³, which had the beautiful shrine of the Sun⁴. King Rājyavardhana's subjects besought of the Sun that the king might reign ten thousand years more, and the Sun granted it⁵. But the king was distressed to know that he would live alone, but not his subjects. Hence the king also went to Kāmarūpa and there, in that Siddhakṣetra, he worshipped the Sun, who was pleased to grant a boon according to his desire. On gaining the boon, the king went back to his capital and ruled his kingdom protecting his people righteously⁶.

A Bhārgava named Pramiti⁷ is mentioned to have sung this song with astonishment :—

‘Lo, the power of faith in the Sun, in that king Rājyavardhana has been born for the increase of life of his own people as well as of himself’ :

मानुभक्तरहोशक्तियद्राजा राज्यवर्द्धनः ।

आयुषोवर्द्धने जातः स्वजनस्य तथात्मनः ॥⁸

It is to be noted that Rājyavardhana is merely styled ‘rājā’ here. Thus we see that the account of Rājyavardhana's life and achieve-

1. Markaṇḍeya CVI. 23.

2. Ibid., CVI. 24-46.

3. Ibid., CVI. 47-58.

4. Ibid., CVI. 58-59 ; Kāmarūpa was a famous Bhāskara-kṣetra cf. Skanda, I.ii.45.133; I.ii.64.142, I59-160; VII.i.139.22.

5. Mārkaṇḍeya, CVII. 3-5

6. Ibid., CVII. 27-34

7. Ibid., CVII. 35

8. Ibid., CVII. 36

ments is mixed up with the mythological account of the royal dynasties of the past (*Vaṁśānucaritam*¹ or *Vaṁśānukramam*).

The inscriptions of Harṣa mention only the name of Rājyavardhana I styled 'Parmādityabhaktaḥ (Mahārāja Śrī Rājyavardhanas)². We do not find details about the career and achievements of Rājyavardhana I elsewhere. Bāṇa is not interested in him. But he was a famous ruler and this is proved by a tradition recorded in the Skanda Purāṇa. Like the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Skanda also glorifies the Sun and his worship at Kāmarūpa. It observes :

ततस्ते कामरूपे या कला नाथ वर्तते ।

राजवर्धनराज्ञा याऽऽराधिता च जनैः पुरा ॥

तया च कलया भानो सदात्त स्थातुमर्हसि ।

ततस्तथेति देवेन प्रोक्ते तुष्टेन भारत ॥³

This reference to the propitiation of the Sun at Kāmarūpa by king Rājyavardhana I and his people is fully corroborated by the account of Rājyavardhana I found in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. Both the Purāṇic texts maintain the celebrity of Kāmarūpa as a Ravikṣetra.

The glory of king Rājyavardhana I was well-set in the subsequent period of history, as Pramiti sang this 'gāthā' relating to the Rājyavardhana-carita. Pramiti was himself a great ruler of the early medieval India.

Probably it was this association of Rājyavardhana I with Kāmarūpa that inspired the ruler of Kāmarūpa—Kumāra, Lord of Prāgjyotiṣa—to extend his hand of friendship towards Harṣa.⁴

1. cf., Mārkaṇḍeya, Chapters CVIII-CXII

2. Banskhera Copper-plate Inscription of Harṣa, line 1.

3. Skanda, I. ii.43. 14-15.

4. Harṣacarita, VII, pp. 288-289

CHAPTER IV

ŚAŚĀNKA AND HIS TIMES

The history of ancient India from the six century B. C. to about 320 A. D. which marks the dawn of Candra (Gupta I) is the story of religious conflicts between Brahmanism and Buddhism. The animosity between these two religious sects was aggravated when Aśoka banned the performance of sacrifices ! The Mauryas witnessed Brahmanical revival—revival of the Vedic sacrifices during the age of Śuṅga-Sātavāhana kings. The age of Kaṇiṣka, again, was marked by the growth of Buddhism and the Sanskrit Buddhist texts—Divyāvadāna (cf., Śārdūla-karṇāvadāna), Lalitavistara, Mahāvastu, Avadānaśataka etc.—deprecate Brāhmaṇas and Brahmanical mode of life and thought. It led to a reaction and revolt against the 'Nagnas' i.e. Buddhists and Jains².

Thus these sectarian rivalries marred the political and cultural life of Ancient India before the rise of the Gupta empire. The dawn of the Gupta Age marks the rise of 'vikaitavo-dharmaḥ' based on truth and piety i.e. Bhāgavatism³. It recognised the Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Thus a glorious epoch of samavāya was established by the enlightened rulers—Samudragupta, and Candragupta II. It laid the foundation of the Golden era of culture and art. But the fall of the Gupta empire witnessed an age of disintegration. It had been aptly styled Kali Age which engulfed the whole country⁴. Kali means conflict and, as such, political strife and religious conflicts raised their monstrous heads to devour the strength and stability of Bhārati-śakti⁵. The Purāṇas

1. R. E. I.; Mookerji, Aśoka, pp. 20, 66, 128-129, 130.

2. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, III, chapters 17-18.

3. Bhāgavata P., I. 1.1-2.

4. Harha Stone Inscription of Iśānavarman, verse 15.

5. cf., I.H.Q., September 1950, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, pp. 241 ff. Basak, H.N.E.I., pp. 133-136.

Awasthi, Rājapūta Rājavamśa, pp. 13-16.

which contain significant allusions to Soma-rāja or Śaśāṅka explicitly tell us that the important limbs of Hindu polity viz, Brahma and Kṣātra¹ were at war. It led to the age of decline styled Kṛīṇa-yuga marked by darkness (lokeṇdhakārīkṛte)². The rise of Prabhākara (Sun or Prabhākaravardhana) strengthened the social institutions or Varṇāśrama-vyavasthā³. But the coming of Parama-saugata Rājyavardhana seems to have reversed the religious policy of his ancestors who were devout worshippers of the Sun⁴. Parama-saugata Rājyavardhana seems to have fought against the king Soma⁵, champion of Brāhmaṇas. Buddhists took keen interest in placing Harṣa on the throne;⁶ for Harṣa was asked by them to revive the glory of Buddhism⁷. Thus the age of Harṣa and Śaśāṅka also marks an era of conflict among the champions of Buddhism and Brahmanism. Māheśvaras were hostile to Buddhists, as observes Dr. B. N. Srivastava⁸.

Prof. C. D. Chatterjee observes that, "The history of Śaśāṅka forms an interesting study by itself. Like a comet he flashes through the political firmament and eventually fades away, leaving nothing but a trail of glory behind"⁹. But his heroic character

1. cf. Śānti Parva, LXXIII. 5, 12, 28.
2. Harha Stone Ins. of Išānavarman, line 14.
3. Banskhera Copper Plate Ins. of Harṣavardhana, line 3 :
वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थापनप्रवृत्तचक्र...
4. Ibid., line 5.
5. Ibid., lines 1-4.
6. M.M.K., pp. 634/14-16 : भविष्यति च तदा काले मध्यदेशे नृपो वरः ।
रकाराद्योतयुक्तात्मा वैश्यवृत्तिमचञ्चलः ॥
शासनेऽस्मिं तथा शक्त सोमाख्य ससमो नृप ॥

Here Rājyavardhana is mentioned as equal in strength to Soma (Śaśāṅka).

7. Watters, T. Y., I, p. 343.
8. J.U.P.H.S. (N.S.), Part I-II, 1962,
(B. N. Srivastava, Saśāṅka), p. 44, Note 2.
9. Prof., C. D. Chatterjee, Foreword, Śaśāṅka, King of Gauḍa,
by Dr. B. N. Srivastava.

and glimpses of his glorious deeds are preserved in the Purāṇas. Śaśāṅka was a great ruler who championed the cause of Brāhmaṇas and Brahmanical culture. His court witnessed the redaction of many Purāṇas which have preserved the relics of his glorious achievements. But his name, Soma, is mixed with his namesake, Soma (or Candra).

His original name was Soma as we know from the Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa, as well as from the Purāṇas—the Skanda, the Garuḍa, the Varāha, and from the Viṣṇudharmottaram.

The Purāṇas have preserved a few details about the personality of this great ruler who launched a vigorous and aggressive policy for the supremacy of Madhyadeśa, though he failed in his venture.¹

PURĀṆAS AND SOMA

Purāṇas, as the sources for the history of Śaśāṅka², have not been considered so far by any scholar. So far only Buddhist writers—the Chinese Pilgrim, Yuan-chwang (Hiuen Tsiang) and the author of Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa—and Bāṇa, the biographer of Harṣa as well as inscriptions and coins have been studied for the history of this great ruler. Bāṇa as well as the Buddhist writers are biased and prejudiced against Soma (Śaśāṅka) who had to suffer from the terrible ills of life in hell for the hostile acts against Buddhism as we know from the Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa³. The Purāṇas also shower encomium on the personality

1. MMK., p. 634.

2. Basak, H.N.E.I. pp. 132-133

B. N. Srivastava, Śaśāṅka, pp. 27-28 ; the pages are numbered according to J.U.P.H.S. (N.S.), 1962, Vol. X, Parts I-II, pp. 27 ff. The article is published in the form of a book with the foreword of Prof. C. D. Chatterjee without changing the numbers of pages as are given in the Journal.

3. MMK., III, p. 635

of Soma styled Dvijarāja who was crowned as a great ruler after the performance of Rājasūya sacrifice.

VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARAM

The importance of the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa as a source of history has not been properly assessed. Chap. 74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaram (khaṇḍa I) makes very important allusions to Śaśāṅka, or Rājā Soma, who represents the celebrated Gauḍādhīpa of Harṣacarita of Bāṇa. It also refers to Śūra and Pramiti, the two notable rulers of the post-Gupta era.

The importance of the entire chapter of the Viṣṇudharmottaram (chap. 74, khaṇḍa I) supplemented with that of the Garuḍa Purāṇa (Section I, chapter 215), the former being an elaborate version of the latter, presents the picture of the age of Śaśāṅka.

We give the Garuḍa-version below :—

प्रलयं जगतो वक्ष्ये तत्सर्वं शृणु शीतक ।
 चतुर्युग सहस्रन्तु कल्पकाब्ज दिनं स्मृतम् ॥ I. 215. 4
 कृतत्रेताद्वापरादि युगावस्थां निबोध मे ।
 कृते धर्मश्चतुष्पाच्च सत्यं दानं तपो दया ॥ I. 215. 5
 धर्मपाता हरिश्चेति सन्तुष्टा ज्ञानिनो नराः ।
 चतुर्वर्षं सहस्राणि नरा जीवन्ति वै तदा ॥ I. 215. 6
 कृतान्ते क्षत्रियैर्विप्रा विट्शूद्राश्च जिताद्विजैः ।
 शूरश्चाति बलो विष्णू रक्षांसि च जघान ह ॥ I. 215. 7
 त्रेतायुगे त्रिपाद्वर्मः सत्यदानदयात्मकः ।
 नरा यज्ञपरास्तस्मिंस्तथा क्षत्रोद्भवं जगत ॥ I. 215. 8
 रक्तो हरिर्नरैः पूज्यो नरा दशशतायुषः ।
 तत्र विष्णुभीमरथः क्षत्रियान् राक्षसानहन् ॥ I. 215. 9

Viṣṇu-dharmottara version runs thus :—

अस्मिन्स्तु भारते वर्षे परिक्षीणे युगे तथा ।
 अवस्था या भवेद्ब्रह्मस्तन्मे व्याख्यातुमर्हसि ॥ I. 74. 2
 मार्कण्डेय उवाच—युगे युगे परिक्षीणे वर्षे यादव भारते ।
 संग्रामेण विनश्यन्ति प्रायो वर्णोत्तमो जनाः ॥ I. 74. 3
 वज्र उवाच— अस्माच्चतुर्युगाद्ब्रह्मान्यदतीतं युगत्रयम् ।
 तेष्वहं श्रोतुमिच्छामि संग्रामं भृगुनन्दन ॥ I. 74. 4

- मार्कण्डेय उवाच—आसीत्कृतयुगस्यान्ते विप्राणां क्षत्रियैस्सह ।
 वैश्यानां च सशूद्राणां युद्धं परमं दारुणम् ॥ I. 74. 5
 वर्णत्रयं तत्र रणे क्षत्रियैर्विनिपातितम् ।
 ततश्च ब्राह्मणाः केचित्क्षत्रियानेवमब्रुवन् ॥ I. 74. 6
 अल्पैर्भवद्भिः कार्येण वयं केन विनिर्जिताः ।
 तान्ब्रुवन्महाभागाः क्षत्रियास्सत्यसंगराः ॥ I. 74. 7
 एकोऽस्माकं द्विजश्चेष्टसेनानीरिति विश्रुतः ।
 सर्वशस्त्रास्त्र कुशलो वयं तस्य मते स्थिताः ॥ I. 74. 8
 भवतां बहुचित्तत्वाद्वयं तस्मात्पदेपदे ।
 जयामो विपुल सैन्यं नात्रकार्या विचारणा ॥ I. 74. 9
 क्षत्रियैरेवमुक्तास्ते ब्राह्मणास्संशितव्रताः ।
 शशाङ्कं शरणं जग्मुर्द्विजेशं सोममञ्जसा ॥ I. 74. 10
 स तानुवाच धर्मात्मा सोमो राजा द्विजोत्तमान् ।
 प्रयागे भार्गवो विद्वान्ब्राह्मणस्संशित व्रतः ॥ I. 74. 11
 शूर इत्येव विख्यातो नित्यं वसति धार्मिकः ।
 प्रमतिर्नाम तस्यास्ति पुत्रो धर्मभृतां वरः ॥ I. 74. 12
 सर्वं शास्त्रार्थं (शस्त्रास्त्र) कुशलो धनुर्वेद परायणः ।
 विष्णुर्मानुष्यमापन्नो युष्मत्कार्यार्थं सिद्धये ॥ I. 74. 13
 कृत्वा सेना प्रणेतारं तं तु कृष्णाजिनध्वजम् ।
 निर्मयदान्रणे सर्वान्क्षत्रियांस्तान्विजेष्यथ् ॥ I. 74. 14
 सोमस्य वचनं सर्वैरेवमुक्तैर्द्विजैः कृतम् ।
 प्रायः क्षत्रियहीनेयं लघ्वी वसुमती कृता ॥ I. 74. 15
 आदौ कृता क्षत्रबलैर्विद्वद्भिरद्विजविजिता ।
 एवं कृतयुगस्यान्ते युद्धमासीत्सुदारुणम् ॥ I. 74. 16
 तथा त्रेतायुगस्यान्ते राक्षसैर्युद्धकर्कशैः ।
 राष्ट्रं राष्ट्रमथासाद्य पार्थिवास्सगणाहताः ॥ I. 74. 17
 राजा भीमरथो नाम विष्णुर्मानुष्यरूपधृक् ।
 दिवोदासान्वयं जातो निजघानथराक्षसान् ॥ I. 74. 18

Thus by comparing the two Purāṇic versions quoted above we notice that the verses 2-4 of the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ run like prologue to the drama of strife (saṃgrāmaṃ), which led to the national calamity in ancient India ; verse 7 of the Garuḍa-Purāṇa

has been elaborately explained so as to introduce the personality of Śaśāṅka. While doing so the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ discusses the causes that led to the defeat of the Brāhmaṇas at the hands of the Kṣatriyas. The former suffered from their inconsistency of thought; and their leadership, too, was defective. Thus moved by the Kṣatriyas, Brāhmaṇas approached Śaśāṅka and probably persuaded him to assume their leadership. Śaśāṅka, however, declined, but he sent them to Śūra living at Prayāga. The 'Śūraścātibalo Viṣṇu' of the Garuḍa Purāṇa has been translated by Mr. M. N. Dutt as 'the valarous Viṣṇu of mighty prowess'. The celebrated translator, or even the history itself, then did not know about the historical personality of Śūra, which is upheld by the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ. He is specifically mentioned to be a Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa, and Viṣṇu-incarnate according to the Garuḍa Purāṇa. Śūra is known to be the founder of the Śūra dynasty¹. Between Śūra and Bhīmaratha, the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ has again inserted the name of Pramiti, the exalted supporter of Dharma. The manner in which Śaśāṅka, coupled with his epithets 'dvijeśa' and Soma, is mentioned and the complimentary title of 'dharmātma' against the derogatory epithets of 'durmedha'² and 'duṣṭakarmānucāriṇaṁ' used for him in the Buddhist text reveal the repugnant mind of the Buddhists. On the other hand the Purāṇakāra was zealous enough in upholding the magnanimous character of Śaśāṅka, whose character has been tarnished by the Buddhist bias of Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa as well as by Bāṇa due to his partisanship for his patron, Harṣa, the adversary of Śaśāṅka. It is surprising that Dr. Hazra failed to take notice of Śaśāṅka, Śūra, Bhīmaratha and Pramiti.

The subsequent portions of the Garuḍa Purāṇa as well as the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ are associated with the ancient learning and literature. Hence, it is evident that the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ has modified the contents. It follows Garuḍa in giving an account of the literary activities of Vyāsa as far as Vedas and the Mahābhārata are concerned. It does not contain the list of the Purāṇas and the Upa-purāṇas found in the Garuḍa (I. 215. 11-20). On

1. Classical Age, pp. 192-193, 218.

R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India (Banaras, 1952), p. 407.

2. M.M.K., p. 634, lines 8, 10.

the other hand the Viṣṇudharmottaram glorifies the Mahābhārata as well as Rāmākhyaṇa (Viṣṇudha. I. 74. 21-31) followed by the enumeration of the fourteen Vidyās (Viṣṇudha. I. 74. 32) as well as the philosophical systems of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra, Śaiva-Pāśupata and 'Kṛtānta-pañcaka' (Viṣṇudha. I. 74. 45). Garuḍa enumerates 18 Vidyās (I. 215. 21).

The discourse on the Vidyās is followed by the picture of the Kali-age. Garuḍa account (I. 215. 23-37) does not deal with the achievements of Kalki, the annihilator of the Mlecchas (Viṣṇudha., I. 74. 40-43).

Chapter 74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaram (I) comes to an end with the account addressed to Narendracandra (I. 74. 75) which we often find occurring in the Viṣṇudharmottaram in the vocative case. Śaśāṅka was also known by the name of Narendracandra. Thus Viṣṇudharmottaram takes special cognizance of Śaśāṅka while discussing the age of the crisis and catastrophe in Indian history. At the end of the Golden Age there ensued fierce fighting among the Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas assisted by the Vaiśyas.

The subsequent period of Indian history is marked by mutual fighting among the rulers of the country. Embossed in Kali (strife), they lost sense of unity which was essential for the preservation of Dharma, threatened by the Mlecchas. To my mind, the entire Chapter 74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaram seems to discuss the question as to "how this (sacred) country has been filled with the Mlecchas"¹. The Skanda Purāṇa does not discuss the question, which seems to be explained by Mārkaṇḍeya in the Viṣṇudharmottaram.

The whole chapter is very important for the study of Indian history from 7th to 12th century A. D. We propose to discuss the following points :—

1. Sk., V. iii. 5. 14 :

कथं म्लेच्छ समाकीर्णो देशोऽयं द्विजसत्तम ।

एतदाचक्ष्व मां ब्रह्मन् मार्कण्डेय महामते ॥

St. Sk. Pt. I, pp 220-231

- (1) Śaśāṅka the patron of Brāhmaṇas and himself a Brāhmaṇa.
- (2) Śūra-dynasty.
- (3) Pramiti—his historical personality.
- (4) Nature of the Kali-age.
- (5) Rāma-cult and the glory of the Rāmākhyāna.

ŚAŚĀŅKA—RĀJĀ SOMA—THE DVIJEŚA

Śaśāṅka, or Rājā Soma, styled 'dvijeśa', who attracted the afflicted Brāhmaṇas to his refuge, must have attained to great celebrity by way of his heroic achievements. Though the Purāṇa does not refer to his capital or country, yet it seems to be situated at a sufficient distance from Prayāga, where the Brāhmaṇas were to seek the shelter of Śūra. Thus this allusion to 'Śaśāṅkaṃ.....dvijeśaṃ somaṃ' corresponds to the great 'Gauḍādhīpa' of the same name.

The Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa, the celebrated Buddhist text, also refers to king Soma as a champion of Brāhmaṇas, who was himself a Brāhmaṇa :

सोमाख्यो द्विजाख्यो महाभोगी भवे ह्यसौ ।

भोगान् द्विजातिषु दत्ता वै राज्यं कृत्वा वै तदा ॥¹

Again, the Buddhist treatise refers to king Soma, the unique hero, ruling over the countries situated on the banks of the Ganges, extending even upto Vārāṇasī :

सोमाख्योपि ततो राजा एकवीरो भविष्यति ।

गंगातीरपर्यन्तं वाराणस्यामतः परम् ॥²

King Soma (Rājā Somākhyo) corresponding to Śaśāṅka, is identical with Śaśāṅka, and Rājā Soma of the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ, which unlike the Harṣacarita employing puns or some 'veiled' statements relating to Gauḍādhīpa, explicitly refers to Śaśāṅka, alias rājā Soma, the Dvijeśa, i.e. the lord (or the champion) of the Brāhmaṇas³. It was certainly the heroic character (ekavīratā) that drew the hordes of the Brāhmaṇas to him for help. It justi-

1. M.M.K., p. 635, lines 10-11.

2. Ibid, p. 634.

3. V. Dh., I. 74. 10.

fies the epithets of 'dvijeśaḥ' or 'dvijāhvayo' associated with rājā Soma.

NARENDRA GUPTA, NARENDRĀDITYA, NARENDRA CANDRA

Dr. Buhler mentioned (in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 70) that in one manuscript of *Harṣacarita* the name of the Gauḍa-king is stated as Narendragupta (or Narendrāditya)¹. Dr. Basaka suggests that "the compound word 'durnarendrābhībhavarōṣitaḥ' meaning 'enraged by the humiliation offered by that wicked Narendra, used by Bāṇa as an adjective to Harṣavardhana, refers under the garb of a pun to Śaśāṅka².

The *Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ* is stated to be recited by Mārkaṇḍeya in the court of Vajra, styled Yaduvaṃśa-Candra.³ The *Purāṇa* repeatedly addresses the king as Narendra-Candra⁴ as well as Narendra,⁵ Narendra-dvijendra⁶ and Narendrendra.⁷ In addition to Chapter 74 (of *Khaṇḍa* I) where we find specific reference to Śaśāṅka or Soma rājā, elsewhere too, we find allusions to Śaśāṅka (*Śaśāṅkasya mahātmnaḥ*)⁸ as well as its synonyms viz., *Candraḥ*, *Somaḥ* and 'Śaśāṅko,'⁹ Here Narendra-dvijendra deserves particular notice. Chapter 132 of *Khaṇḍa* I, dealing with the account of the rise of Moon (*Candrodaya*), showers much encomium on Śaśāṅka,¹⁰ the dispeller of darkness¹¹ (*Kali-timira*). The Chapter concludes with the observations :—

1. H. N. E. I., pp. 137-138.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
3. V. Dh. III. 221. 110.
4. *Ibid.*, I. 144.23 ; I. 250.36 ; III. 18.63 ; III. 25.75 ; III. 93.47.
5. *Ibid.*, I. 125.29.
6. *Ibid.*, III. 196.1.
7. *Ibid.*, I. 249.18.
8. *Ibid.*, I. 71.8.
9. *Ibid.*, III. 8.20 (ii).
10. *Ibid.*, I. 132.28.
11. *Ibid.*, I. 132.30-34 cf. undated Udayagiri Ins. of Candra Gupta II, V. I, which refers to Candra Gupta (II) as a wonderful light which shines like the Sun, radiant with internal light upon the earth, day and night.

चन्द्रोदये चन्द्रसमानवक्रे नरेन्द्रचन्द्रे प्रमदावरेऽस्मिन् ।
पश्य त्वमाशंस च जीविताशां त्वद्भाग्यनुन्नं सहसा प्रविष्टम् ॥ ¹

These scattered references to the glory and greatness of Śaśāṅka-Candra exhibit the knowledge of the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ relating to the rise of Śaśāṅka.

The Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa as well as the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ give a vivid picture of northern India just before the rise of Śaśāṅka. According to the Buddhist text, "There was a civil war amongst them, greedy for the kingdom. It ended by the installation of 'S'. (Sakāṛākhyāṃ), the youngster who became a mere symbol. The Brahmin leaders who had done this became disunited amongst themselves. Reaching the province of Magadha in the city called Udumbara the leading Brahmin crowned two boys. Then he retired to the East, and arriving in the province of Gauḍa, they (? or one of them ?) become(s) rivalless. The two boy-chiefs were killed by the wicked one in Kalinga, and owing to his bad guide he committed many murders : he killed all those Gauḍas who had been honoured by the kings who had fostered civil war".² While commenting on this passage Dr. Jayaswal observes that "The account is somewhat confused. It is not clear whether the chief Brahmin minister went to Gauḍa and punished the Gauḍas who had taken part in the family feud, or whether one of the two boys—called bālamukhyān (?)—evidently only one is meant from several adjectives—did this. This feud and oppression of Bengal led to the rise of Śaśāṅka".³ According to the text itself we get that the following events marked the age before the rise of Śaśāṅka probably during the reign of Samācāradeva (sakāṛākhyā), the predecessor of Śaśāṅka :—

1. V. Dh., I. 132.35.

2. K. P. Jayaswal, Imperial History of India, p. 49, vide his M. M. K. text, p. 52, lines 708-714.

cf. M. M. K. (Gaṇapati Śāstri Edn.), p. 633, lines 18-27, p. 634, lines 1-4.

3. Imperial History, p. 49.

- (i) Great fighting due to mutual envy spurred by the greed for 'he kingdom (or political power).¹
- (ii) In this conflict 'dvi-jāti-mukhyas' i.e. Brāhmaṇa-leaders also took an active part.²
- (iii) King Soma (Śaśāṅka) exerted his influence (as far west) as Vārāṇasī on the Ganges, and
- (iv) Then, Soma, an unparalleled hero, will become king upto the banks of the Ganges, upto Vārāṇasī and beyond. He, of wicked intellect, will destroy the beautiful image of the Buddha. He, of wicked intellect, enamoured of the words of the Tirthikas, will burn that great bridge of religion (Dharma), (as) prophesied by the former Jinās (Buddhas). Then that angry and greedy evil-doer of false notions and bad opinion will fell down all the monasteries, gardens, and chaityas; and the establishments of the Nirgranthas³ (Jinas)", (Imperial History, pp. 49-50).
- (v) The renowned king Soma (nrpatiṃ Somaviśrutam), who was equal to Rājyavardhana in power, the latter of Vaiśya vṛtti, ruled over Madhyadeśa. Thus Śaśāṅka and Rājyavardhana were rivals. The latter is associated with the Nagna-jāti.⁴ According to Dr. Jayaswal, "He (Rājyavardhana) also ends at the hand of a king of the Nagna caste (Imp. Hist., p. 50). His younger brother, named Harṣavardhana (hakārākhyah), an unique hero, possessing great army marched against the famous king named Soma. Harṣavardhana, the powerful Vaiśya king, following kṣātra-dharma invaded Puṇḍrapura, the capital of Soma, who was defeated. Śaśāṅka was confined with-

1. M. M. K., p. 633, lines 19-20

2. Ibid., p. 633, lines 23, 25.

3. Ibid., p. 634, lines 6-12.

4. Ibid., p. 634, lines 14-17.

in his own kingdom.¹ Harṣa returned to his own kingdom, having been honoured in the kingdom of the Mlecchas (Mleccha-rājye mapūjitaḥ).²

(vi) Soma was a Brāhmaṇa, devoted to the good of the Brāhmaṇas.³

Now we see, clearly, by taking together the information obtained from the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ and Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa that there was rivalry among Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. The latter are represented as the champions of Buddhism. It is for this reason that the Buddhist text applies many derogatory terms—‘durmedhaḥ’, ‘duṣṭakarmānucāriṇaṃ somākhyam’ to Śaśāṅka whereas the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ hails Śaśāṅka as the defender of Dharma (Brahmanism). The Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa gives us the detailed history of the times, whereas the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ gives us some information about Śaśāṅka, only by coincidence, in connection with the account of India in the ‘Kṣīṇa-yuga’⁴ marked by the social, religious and political crisis leading to ‘saṃgrāmaṃ’.⁵ This spirit of narrow outlook is exhibited even by the literature, particularly the two texts under review. The Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ showers encomium on the personality of Śaśāṅka, whose conduct is censured by Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa. Yuan Chwang also supports the Buddhist text in branding Śaśāṅka as “a wicked king of Karṇasuvarṇa in East India, a persecutor of Buddhism”.⁶ Thus taking all these statements in view we realise that the collapse of the Gupta empire left a void in Madhyadeśa and the petty rulers as well as feudatories entered into contest of political supremacy in Northern India. It marks the beginning of Decadent India.

“Two powerful states situated side by side were regarded by ancient Indian politicians as natural or potential enemies, while

1. M. M. K., p. 634, lines 18-27.

2. Ibid., p. 635, lines 1-2.

3. Ibid., p. 635, lines 11-12

4. V. Dh., I. 74.45 (i)

5. Ibid., I. 74.3.

6. Watters, T. Y. II, p. 343.

an other powerful state situated on the further side of the neighbouring enemy state was called a natural and potential friend.....
... Such natural enmity existed between Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa in the second half of the sixth and the first half of the seventh century, although it was a legacy of the past..... About the middle of the sixth century, there were, besides Kāmarūpa three other powerful states carved out on the ruins of the Gupta empire. These were the kingdoms of the Gauḍas comprising parts of Bengal and Behar, that of the Maukharis including parts of Behar and the Uttar Pradesh, and that of the so called Later Guptas of Mālavā (East Malwa)".¹

"The Gauḍas were also the enemies of their western neighbours, the Maukharis, while they were friends of the Later Guptas ruling on the further side of the Maukhari kingdom. Thus the political system of Northern India was marked by the factious struggle for supremacy, aggravated by the caste-conflicts and narrow outlook (cf. Studies in Skanda Purāṇa-Part One, pp. 227-228).

Bāṇa makes an allusion to the gradual rise into eminence of king Śaśāṅka's maṇḍala (or circle of political jurisdiction). Nowhere in the whole of this book has Bāṇa made a clear mention of the name of the Gauḍādhīpa, except in the following sentence where, like the rise of the moon, the rise into political prominence of Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa, has been noted, though in a veiled manner, in a few words involved in puns. The passage runs thus :—

प्रकट कलङ्कमुदयमानम्..... अकाशताकाशे शशाङ्कमण्डलम् ।²

'The rising political circle or sphere of (king) Śaśāṅka was attaining prominence in the political horizon (of India), but with its infamy manifested (before the world)'. Bāṇa emphatically, but in a covert way, gives the cause of the unsteady nature of Śaśāṅka's royalty, which, according to him was "not to last in its

1. I. H. Q., XXVI, No. 3, Sept., 1950, p. 241.

2. H. C., VI, pp. 245-246.

perfect fullness for more than two days like the beauty of the moon in the sky.¹ He says :—

कातरस्य तु शुशिन इव हरिणहृदयस्य पाण्डरपृष्ठस्य कुतो द्विरात्रमपि निश्चला लक्ष्मीः²

Like Bāṇa, the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ, as has been stated above, gives a graphic account of Candrodaya (Viṣṇudha., I, Chap. 132).

“But we must remember that at first Śaśāṅka was a feudal chief having the use of the title Mahāsāmanta only as is evidenced by the inscription cut in reverse, found at the hill-fort of Rohtasgarh in the Shahabad district”.³ But, who was the lord whom he owed his allegiance as a Mahāsāmanta? There are different views expressed by the different scholars. Dr. B. N. Srivastava observes that, “It is, however, difficult to say with any amount of certainty whose vassal chief he was. The presumption is that he might have been a feudatory chief of the highest order of the Maukhari king Avantivarman, whose contemporary undoubtedly he was. The Avantivarman had exercised political supremacy over a considerable portion of Magadha, is evident from the Deo-Baranark Inscription of Jivitagupta II, wherein it has been specifically mentioned that the Maukhari king in question had made some land-grant in favour of the god Varuṇasvāmin and confirmed the same by issuing a royal Charter (C. I. I., III, p. 218). Unless he had been actually ruling over Magadha, it would not have been possible for him to exercise his royal prerogative in that manner”.⁴ Dr. B. P. Sinha holds that “Śaśāṅka was appointed the governor or high feudatory of Magadha by Jayanāga. Rohtasgarh, on the Son, may have been chosen as the seat of the new government as it was strategically near the frontiers of the Maukhari kingdom in U. P., presided over by Grahavarman. Ganguli thought that Śaśāṅka was a feudatory of Avantivarman and for sometime of Grahavarman, as well and so he was not a national hero of Bengal but rather a successful conqueror. But there is no

1. H. N. E., pp. 136-137.

2. H. C., VI, p. 260

3. H. N. E. I., p. 141.

4. J. U. P. H. S., Vol. X (N. S.), pt. I & II), 1962. pp. 35-36.

proof that Grahavarman was ever a ruler of Magadha. The coins of Śāśāṅka are very similar to those of Jayanāga. The latter is referred to as 'Gauḍarāja', in the M. M. K. (I. H. I., text, p. 55, V. No. 750). Śāśāṅka was certainly a native of Bengal, who became governor of Magadha. According to Majumdar, Śāśāṅka began his life as a 'Mahāsāmanta' under Mahāsenagupta,..... (Dr. R. C. Majumdar, History of Bengal, Vol. I p. 56). But this contingency, necessitating reconquest of Magadha from the Maukharis by Mahāsenagupta, is hardly possible..... Naturally therefore, Śāśāṅka could neither be a feudatory of a Maukhari king nor of Mahāsenagupta. He was a Gauḍa and his rise began under the Gauḍa king Jayanāga. Neither the Maukharis nor the Guptas could trust him with the high office in view of their past hostility with the Gauḍas. The upshot of the entire discussion is that the Gauḍas under Jayanāga took advantage of the trouble in the Maukhari family over the question of Magadha. Śāśāṅka was chosen as the leader of the campaign against Magadha, and after the successful expulsion of the Maukharis from the country he became the high feudatory under the Gauḍa king Jayanāga. Thus the rise of Śāśāṅka practically began with the disruption in the Maukhari family on the issue of Magadha. Our theory is singularly corroborated by the M. M. K., wherein it is clearly stated that there will be mutual disunion in the Magadha monarchy in east at the time of Soma (Śāśāṅka) (I. H. I., p. 65, Sec. 51, text, p. 58, verse 780)".¹

Thus Dr. Sinha, after discussing all the theories regarding the feudal character of Śāśāṅka has tried to prove with labour that Śāśāṅka was the successor of Jayanāga. There are some serious difficulties in accepting the theory of Dr. Sinha. Firstly Manjuśrī Mūlakalpa explicitly places Jayanāga after the death of king Soma, when his son Mānava will come to power for a short period of eight months or so.² Hence it has been held by Majumdar and

1. Decline of Magadha, pp. 222-224

2. M. M. K., p. 636

I. H. I., pp. 50-51

others that Jayanāga followed Śaśāṅka.¹ The evidence to show that the first historical king of the Gaudas was Jayanāga, though much laboured, is not conclusive. Secondly Jayanāga is specifically stated to be a Nāgarāja—a fact corroborated by the second part of his name. “Near him will be Brahmins and other Vaiśyas by caste ; the Nāgas will be surrounded by Vaiśyas and will themselves be Vaiśyas”.² Dr. Jayaswal further suggests that “The Tibetan text in place of the first line seems to read that the Nāgas were of the lowest Brahmin class, originally and later on their status was that of the Vaiśyas”.³ It has been pointed out above that Rājyavardhana, a Vaiśya, is stated to be a powerful rival of Soma and the former ended his life at the hands of a king of ‘Nagna-jāti’ :—

भविष्यते च तदा काले मध्यदेशे नृपो वरः

रकारद्योत युक्तात्मा वैश्यवृत्तिमचञ्चलः ॥

शासनेऽस्मिं तथा शक्त सोमाख्यससमो नृप ।

सोऽपि याति तवान्तेन नग्नजाति नृपेण तु ॥⁴

Thus, it is evident that a king of ‘Nagna-jāti’, probably the same as Nāga-rāja was an ally of king Soma employed by the latter to kill Rājyavardhana. This Nāgarāja, an accomplice of Śaśāṅka, was none else than Jayanāga who followed Śaśāṅka as a ruler of Gauḍa.

It should be borne in mind that the Buddhist text as well as the Viṇṇudharmottaraṃ specifically acclaim Śaśāṅka-Soma as a dvija (= Brāhmaṇa),⁵ who supported Brāhmaṇas in their struggle against the Kṣatriyas. As such, Śaśāṅka cannot be associated with

1. R. C. Majumdar, H. B., Vol. I, p. 56.

Saletore, Life in the Gupta Age, p. 71.

Sinha, Decline of Magadha, p. 220.

2. I. H. I., p. 51 ; M. M. K., p. 636.

3. I. H. I., p. 51, foot note 1.

4. M. M. K., p. 634, lines 14-17.

5. Dr. B. N. Srivastava, it is surprising, has not considered the Brāhmaṇa lineage of Śaśāṅka (J. U. P. H. S., Vol. X, N. S., pp. 28-35), as it was already pointed out by Dr. K. P. Jayaswal (I. H. I., p. 51).

Nāgarāja, Jayanāga, in the family-ties. Śaśāṅka is hailed as pious (dharmātmā Soma-rājā)¹ and dvijeśa,² whereas 'Nagnakāḥ,' same as the scions of Nagnajāti, are styled Mlecchas i. e. vicious people, probably because of their fondness for killing the living-beings and 'gavāśana' and they were settled in the south-east (agnau Nagnakāḥ pāpā)³. The Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa ascribes to them the Vipra-Vaiśya lineage.

The Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ in an unveiled manner ascribes the country's decline and degeneration to mutual fighting among Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas, the latter were assisted by the Vaiśyas and Śūdras against the former. Despite their large numbers the Brāhmaṇas were defeated due to their dissensions and defective leadership. Vanquished by the Kṣatriyas they approached Śaśāṅka for assuming their leadership. But Śaśāṅka directed them to a Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa named Śūra, who lived at Prayāga. Śaśāṅka asked the Brāhmaṇas that Pramiti, son of Śūra, representing Viṣṇu in human form would bring them success by destroying the Kṣatriyas opposed to law in battle.⁴

Here we should note that Rājā Soma, who was himself deemed fit to help the Brāhmaṇas, sent them to the refuge of Śūra and his son Pramiti. Thus it is evident that Śaśāṅka, despite his power and position, was subordinate and subservient to Pramiti (?) whom Śaśāṅka owed his vassalage.

But who was Pramiti? History is silent, though the Purāṇas are permeated with the heroic role of Pramiti as the saviour of Madhyadeśa. Attention is focussed to the war-standard of Pramiti styled 'Kṛṣṇājina-dhvajaṁ' which symbolises the glory of Madhyadeśa.

There is evidence to show that Śūra dynasty ruled in the Madhyadeśa around Prayāga as we know from the Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ.

1. Viṣṇudha., I. 74. 11 (i).

2. Ibid., I. 74. 10

3. Padma-Purāṇa, V. 44.72.

4. V. Dh., I. 74. 2-15.

ŚŪRA DYNASTY

Benaras Plates of Harirāja¹ throw light on the history of Śūra dynasty. The Copper Plate Inscription records the grant of a portion of land in Ambraka Nagara belonging to the Chief-queen of Harirāja to a Brāhmaṇa, Somasvāmin of Kaundinya gotra. "King Harirāja is credited with qualities and prowess equal to that of Hari i. e. Viṣṇu and is referred to the Śūra dynasty". It is believed to be 'the first epigraphic record of the Śūra dynasty'.² Śūra of the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ seems to be the founder of Śūra Vamśa. Harirāja, equal to Viṣṇu in virtue and prowess, was victor of many battles.³ "One point of importance in the inscription is that the charter is issued by a 'gaṇa' of Mahāmātras, which seems to have been vested with the authority in certain executive functions.....Members of the gaṇa are individually named in the inscription purposely but the singular use of 'asmābhiḥ mahāmātragaṇena' indicates their collective responsibility".⁴ The names of Mahāmātras are—Gonna, Govinda Nārāyaṇa, Mātṛvatsa, Gaṇavatsa, Nāgakumāra, Dāmuka, Skanda, Kokkaṭika, Śaśāṅka, Viṣṇudeva, Prabhākara and others of the council of Mahāmātras.

Śaśāṅka as well as Prabhākara are stated to be the members of Mahāmātra-gaṇa. Both of them seem to have asserted their independence—one in the east and the other in the west. Prof. Bhattacharya observes : "It is not improbable that the territories of the king extended far towards the north and reached the outskirts of Benares and the extent of the kingdom justified the appointment of viceroys"⁵ Thus we hold that Śaśāṅka was a viceroy (mahāśāmantā) of the Śūra dynasty and later on he asserted his independence.

Pramiti, stated to be son of Śūra (?) seems to be inserted by mistake between Śūra and Rājā Bhīmaratha. Bhīmaratha, the Viṣṇu-incarnate, may be identified with the Bhīmasen II of

1. J. U. P. H. S., Vol. XVIII, Pts. 1 & 2, July, Dec., 1945, pp. 167-173.

2. Ibid., p. 169.

3. Benaras Copper Plate Ins. of Harirāja, line 1.

4. J. U. P. H. S., Vol. XVIII, Pts I-II, 1945, pp. 170-171.

5. Ibid., p. 170.

the Śūra-Vaiṣṇa, who ruled about the beginning of the 7th century A. D.¹ Bhīmaratha-Viṣṇu, probably the same as Bhīmasena, was also known by another name of Harirāja, as we know from his Benaras Copper Plates. To him (Bhīmaratha-Bhīmasena alias Harirāja) Śaśāṅka owed his power and position as a member of the Mahāmātragaṇa.

Thus the chapter (74 of the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ, I) is an important source of the history of Śaśāṅka, one of the most remarkable personality of the early medieval India. Harṣacarita contains only veiled references to Gauḍādhīpa with pun on the word Śaśāṅka believed to represent the former. The Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūla Kalpa refers to him by the name of Soma. Yuan Chwang, undoubtedly, refers to him by the name of Śaśāṅka. The Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ on the other hand makes specific references to Śaśāṅka-Soma, the illustrious 'dvijēśa' styled 'dharmātmā rājā'. It exhibits the narrow outlook and partisan spirit of the Buddhist historian (Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa) and the court-poet (Bāṇa), who employ derogatory terms for the great hero of the Āryāvarta—a position recognised by the Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa, which hails him as 'ekavīra', the unique hero.

The unique character of his heroic ascendancy to the position of sovereignty is exhibited by his loyalty to his master. We see that the defeated Brāhmaṇas approached him for accepting their leadership; as they met their disaster in the battle-field for not having an effective leader. Kṣatriyas, as is noted above, confessed that their success was due to the prowess and proficiency of their

1. R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India, Banaras, 1952, p. 407:

"While dealing with history of the dynasty of Śūra, ruling in South Kosala, Dr. Majumdar observes that "Its king Mahendra was defeated by Samudragupta, and it remained a part of the Gupta empire till the latter part, of the 5th century A. D., when a new dynasty was founded by Śūra in the Raipur District. He was followed by his five successors, the last of whom Bhīmasena II ruled about the beginning of 7th. century A. D.".

senāni, an exalted Brāhmaṇa, in whom Kṣatriyas had reposed their full confidence¹ :—

एकोऽस्माकं द्विजश्रेष्ठस्तेनानीरिति विश्रुतः ।

सर्वशस्त्रास्त्र कुशलो वयं तस्य मते स्थिताः ॥

Viṣṇudha., I. 74.8.

This senāni, renowned (viśrutah) for his valourous deeds and the most excellent Brāhmaṇa (dvijaśreṣṭhaḥ) skilled in all the weapons of war (sarvaśāstrāstra-kuśalo) was, most probably, the dvijeśa-Śaśāṅka, whom the Brāhmaṇas wanted to win over to their own side.

But the Kṣatriya king is also not mentioned in the Viṣṇudhar-mottaraṁ. Hence there is still uncertainty about the identity of Śaśāṅka's sovereign lord. Fortunately we know from the Benaras Copper Plates of Harirāja, a powerful and victorious ruler of Śūra-Vaṁśa, that his 'Mahāmātragaṇa' consisted of such illustrious persons as Śaśāṅka and Prabhākara. Emperor Harirāja of Śūra dynasty probably ruling at Prayāga had extensive kingdom with many provinces governed by the Mahāmātras. Even in the age of Aśoka, Mahāmātras or Provincial Governors, were given independent charge of their provinces. Śaśāṅka and Prabhākara, the two ambitious Mahāmātras succeeded at some suitable time to assume their independent status. Prabhākara (Vardhana) was the first to assume the title of Mahārājādhirāja, where as his ancestors were only the Mahārājas.

The political situation in the country after the fall of the Gupta empire was ripe for the genius of such ambitious persons of power and political wisdom. But the struggle for political supremacy of Northern India was also stimulated by social and religious conflicts — conflicts among Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, as well as among the Buddhists and Brāhmaṇas.

The Benares Copper Plates Inscription associates Śaśāṅka with the region around Benares or Vārāṇasī, where king Soma had set up a Śiva-liṅga called Candreśa named after him².

1. I. V. Dh., I. 74. 8 :

2. Skanda P., IV. i. 14. 25.

(Soma is also called Candra). While dealing with the glorification of Candreśa, the Skanda Purāṇa gives some important details about the achievements of Śaśāṅka. We quote the original text for the perusal of the scholars :

शिवशर्मादिवाप्युच्चैरपश्यच्चन्द्रचंद्रिकाम् ।
 आह्लादयंतीं बहुशः समं सर्वेन्द्रियेभ्यः ॥ स्कन्द, ४.१.१४.१३
 चमत्कृत्यचमत्कृत्य कोयं लोको हरेर्गणौ ।
 पप्रच्छ शिवशर्मा तौ प्रोचतुस्तं च तौ द्विजम् ॥
 गणावूचतुः शिवशर्मन् महाभाग लोक एष कलानिधेः ।
 पीयूषवर्षिभिर्यस्य करैराप्याय्यते जगत् ॥ १५
 पिता सोमस्य भो विप्र जज्ञेऽतिर्भगवानृषिः ।
 ब्रह्मणो मानसात्पूर्वं प्रजासर्गविधित्सतः ॥ १६
 अनुत्तरं नाम तपो येन तप्तं हि तत्पुरा ।
 त्रीणि वर्षसहस्राणि दिव्यानीतीह नौ श्रुतम् ॥ १७
 ऊर्ध्वमाचक्रमे तस्य रेतः सोमत्वमीयिवत् ।
 नेत्राभ्यां तच्च सुस्त्राव दशधा द्योतयद्दिशः ॥ १८
 तं गर्भं विधिनादिष्टादशदेव्योदधुस्ततः ।
 समेत्य धारयामासुर्नैव ताः समशक्नुवन् ॥ १९
 यदा न धारणे शक्तास्तस्य गर्भस्यतादिशः ।
 ततस्ताभिः सज्जः सोमो निपपात वसुंधराम् ॥ २०
 पतितं सोममालोक्य ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः ।
 रथमारोपयामास लोकानां हितकाम्यया ॥ २१
 स तेन रथमुख्येन सागरांतां वसुंधराम् ।
 त्रिः सप्तकृत्वो द्रुहिणश्चकारामुं प्रदक्षिणम् ॥ २२
 तस्य यत्पवितं तेजः पृथिवीमन्वपद्यत ।
 तथोपध्यः संमुद्भूताः याभिः संधार्यते जगत् ॥ २३
 स लब्धतेजा भगवान्ब्रह्मणावर्धितः स्वयम् ।
 तपस्तेपेमहाभाग पद्मानां दशतीर्दश ॥ २४
 अविमुक्तं समासाद्य क्षेत्रं परम पावनम् ।
 संस्थाप्य लिङ्गममृतं चंद्रेशाख्यं स्वनामतः ॥ २५

बीजीपद्मीनां तोयानां राजाभूदग्रजन्मनां ॥
 प्रसादाद्देवदेवस्य विश्वेशस्य पिनाकिनः ॥ २६
 तत्र कूपं विधायैकममृतोदमितिस्मृतम् ।
 यस्यांबुपानस्नानाभ्यां नरोऽज्ञानात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ २७
 तुष्टेन देवदेवेन स्वमौली यो धृतः स्वयम् ।
 आदाय तां कलामेकां जगत्संजीवनीं पराम् ॥ २८
 पश्चाद्दक्षेण शप्तोपि मासोनेक्ष्यमाप्य च ॥
 आप्याय्यतेसौ कलया पुनरेव तया शशी ॥ २९
 स तत्प्राप्य महाराज्यं सोमः सोमवतां वरः ॥
 राजसूयं समाजह्ने सहस्रशतदक्षिणम् ॥ ३०
 दक्षिणामददत्सोमस्त्रींलोकानिति नो श्रुतम् ।
 तेभ्यो ब्रह्मर्षिमुद्येभ्यः सदस्येभ्यश्च भो द्विज ॥ ३१
 उमयासहितं रुद्रं संतप्याध्वरकर्मणा ॥
 प्राप सोम इति ख्यातिं दत्तां सोमेन शंभुना ॥ ३४
 तत्रैव तप्तवान्सोमस्तपः परमदुष्करम् ।
 तत्रैव राजसूयं च चक्रे चंद्रेश्वराग्रतः ॥ ३५
 तत्रैव ब्राह्मणैः प्रीतैरित्युक्तोऽसौ कलानिधिः ।
 सोमोऽस्माकं ब्राह्मणानां राजा त्रैलोक्यदक्षिणः ॥ ३६
 तत्रैव देवदेवस्य विलोचनपदं गतः ।
 देवेन प्रीतमनसा त्रैलोक्याह्लादहेतवे ॥ ३७
 त्वं ममास्य परामूर्तिरित्युक्तस्तत्तपोबलात् ।
 जगत्तपोदयं प्राप्य भविष्यति सुखोदयम् ॥ ३८
 त्वत्पीयूषमयैर्हस्तैः स्पृष्टमेतच्चराचरम् ।
 भानुतापपरीतं च परां ग्लानिं विहास्यति ॥ ३९
 एतदुत्त्वा महेशानो वरानन्यानदान्मुदा ।
 द्विजराजतपस्तप्तं यदत्युग्रं त्वयात्र वै ॥ ४०
 यच्चक्रतुक्रियोत्सर्गस्त्वया मह्यं निवेदितः ।
 स्थापितं यत्त्विदं लिङ्गं मम चन्द्रेश्वराभिधम् ॥ ४१
 ततोत्र लिङ्गे त्वन्नाम्नि सोमसोमार्घ्यरूपधृक् ॥

प्रतिमासं पंचदश्यां शुक्लायां सर्वगोप्यहम् ॥ ४२

अभक्ताय च नाख्येयं नास्तिकाय श्रुतिद्रुहे ॥ ४७

Thus, evidently, it is an important ākhyānam which was not to be recited to an atheist (abhaktāya ca nāstikāya) opposed to the Vedas (Śruti-druhe)¹ i.e. those who deprecated and denounced the Vedas². They were, undoubtedly, Buddhists living at Sarnath near Vārāṇasī. Hence it was in the fitness of things that Dvijarāja Soma performed penances and austerities to propitiate Maheśa³.

From the text quoted above we get the following information relating to the history of Śaśāṅka :—

- (i) Śaśāṅka was also known by the names of Candra³ and Soma, who was a devout worshipper of Śiva.
- (ii) The rise of Candra marked the dawn of an age of prosperity in the country which caused happiness to all (āhlādayantīm bahuśaḥ, cf. verse 13) : 'jagat-tavodayam prāpya bhaviṣyati sukhodayam'⁴ (v. 38).

It seems that after the death of Prabhākaravardhana, Śaśāṅka rose to the pinnacle of glory. "In describing the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon on that terrible day on which.....Rājya met his younger brother Harṣa.....and learnt of the untimely death of the monarch and their mother, Bāṇa

1. Skanda, IV. i. 14. 47(i) ; for text, cf. v. 47(j) above.
2. Ibid., IV. i. 14. 40(ii).
3. There were many kings, in the past, known by the name of Candra, (Skanda, P., VII. i. 19. 43 :

असंख्येयाश्चन्द्रमसः संभवन्ति पुनः पुनः ।

cf. Candra of the Mehrauli Pillar Ins-line 5 (चन्द्राह्वेन)
cf. Harha Ins. of Iśānavarman, where Ādityavarman (line 5), and Iśānavarman (l. 11) are called Candra. Iśānavarman is again, styled Candra in the Apsad Stone Ins. of Ādityasena (l. 7). Candrātreyā of the Candella records and Candradeva-Kāśīrāja, the Gahaḍwāla ruler, were other rulers known as Candra.

4. cf., Kāmandakiya Nīṭisāra, I. 9.

makes an allusion to the gradual rise into eminence of king Śaśāṅka's maṇḍala (or circle of political jurisdiction). Nowhere in the whole of this book has Bāṇa made a clear mention of the name of the Gauḍādhīpa,.....except in the following sentence where, like the rise of the moon, the rise into political prominence of Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa, has been noted, though in a veiled manner, in a few words involved in puns. The passage runs thus :

“प्रकटकलंकमुदयमानम्.....अकाशताकाशे शशाङ्कमण्डलम् ।¹

But unlike the veiled references of the Harsacarita, the Skanda Purāṇa makes explicit references to the dawn of Candracandrikā (v. 13) which dazzled the eyes of all (v. 14, camatkṛtya camatkṛtya ko'yaṁ). He was 'kalānidhiḥ', source of pīyūṣa to all (v. 15).

- (iii) He was the son of Atri, the celebrated sage² whose lustre he represented on the earth (vv. 6-23).
- (iv) He was, thus, evidently a Brāhmaṇa and an exalted king of Brāhmaṇas (rājabhūdāgrajanmanāṁ) by the blessings of Deva-deva Viśveśa (v. 26) i. e. Śiva.
- (vi) He performed the Rājasūya-sacrifice at Vārāṇasī near Candreśvara where the Brāhmaṇas selected (or elected) him as their king :

तत्रैव तप्तवान्सोमस्तपः परमदुष्करम् ।
 तत्रैव राजसूयं च चक्रे चंद्रेश्वराग्रतः ॥
 तत्रैव ब्राह्मणैः प्रीतैरित्युक्तोऽसौ कलानिधिः ।
 सोमोऽस्माकं ब्राह्मणानां राजा त्रैलोक्यदक्षिणः ॥³

Thus he was crowned as a king (cf. his coins)⁴ raised to the imperial status.

1. Basak, H. N. E. I., p. 136.

2. cf., Khajuraho Stone (Ins. of Candella Yaśovarman, v. 7.

Khajuraho Stone Ins. of Dhaṅgadeva renewed by Jayavarman-deva, v. 9.

3. Skanda, IV. i. 14. 35-36,

4. On the reverse side of the gold coins of Śaśāṅka, we find Padmā-śrī who is being bathed by elephants. It represents the ceremony of Somābhiṣeka. We will discuss it further.

(v) The Dvijarāja (Candra) worshipped Śiva who bestowed upon him the title of Soma (prāpa soma iti khyātim dattāṁ somena Śambhunā, v. 34), and as a special favour the Lord Śiva placed him on his head.¹

(vii) He had a large empire (sa tat prāpya mahārājyaṁ somaḥ, v. 30) extending from Vārāṇasī to Puṇḍravardhana and Gauḍa in the east.

All these facts mentioned in the above story relating to the glorification of Candreśa (quoted above in original) are corroborated by the gleanings from the inscriptions, and coins. It is also supported by Harṣacarita and the Mañjuśrī Mūlakaḷpa.

He is called 'eka-vira'² i. e. a unique hero in the Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakaḷpa which also asserts that he was himself a dvija whose patronage was enjoyed by Brāhmaṇas.³ He was a great conqueror whose sway extended upto Vārāṇasī :

सोमाख्योऽपि ततो राजा एकवीरो भविष्यति ।

गंगातीरपर्यन्तं वाराणस्यामतः परम् ॥⁴

Thus Vārāṇasī on the Ganges also formed a part of his empire⁵ — a fact of great historical significance.

1. Skanda, IV i. 14. 28 :

तुष्टेन देवदेवेन स्वमौलौ यो धृतः स्वयम् ॥

आदाय तां कलामेकां जगत्संजीवनीं पराम् ॥

Viśākhadatta glorifies the Śaśikalā which is placed on the head of Śiva (Mudrā Rākṣasa, I. 1) and it represents Indu or Bhagavān Candra (M. R., Act I, before I. 6). But it was Mauryendu (Candragupta Maurya) whom Kauṭilya, supporter of Brāhmaṇism, placed on the throne vacated by the Nandas.

2. M. M. K., III, p. 634.

3. Ibid., III, p. 635.

4. Ibid., III, p. 634.

5. H. N. E. I., p. 156 ; Cl. A., p. 79 ; D. M., pp. 243, 345.

Pires, Maukharis, p. 114, Note 1, cf., J. A. S. B., IV (New Series), p. 275.

It is evident that Śaśāṅka arose on the political firmament of Northern India when Ādityas (the Gupta rulers) had disappeared and the sun-set was followed by the dark night of Kali which led to the decline of the country. The Brāhmanism and Brāhmaṇas were threatened by Nagnas and Nāstikas who deprecated Brāhmanical deities (deva-druhaḥ)¹ and those who denounced the Vedas (Śruti-druhaḥ).² Thus Brāhmaṇas found a suitable person like Śaśāṅka whom they chose their king.

ŚAŚĀṆKA (SOMASYA-LĀNCHANAḤ)

Though the Moon (Soma or Śaśāṅka) was wicked and defiled,³ yet like, thousands of siddhas favoured by Śiva, Soma was also patronised by the Lord Śiva who adorned his head by placing Candra⁴ there. Thus the deity became known by the epithet of Śaśibhūṣaṇa.⁵ Candra is also known as one of the jewels which sprang from ocean.⁶ The Candra was a celebrated devotee of Śiva and the coins of Śaśāṅka portray both Śaśi and Śaśibhūṣaṇa or Soma and Someśvara on the obverse. Thus the blot and blemish on the character of Candra had been turned into glory that is known to history as Śaśāṅka or Saśa-lānchana.

Despite the merits of Soma and his association with Śiva, the character of Candra, who was the source of joy and happiness to

1. Skanda, IV. i. 14. 5 (i) ;

पुर्यष्टक च दुष्टेभ्यो देवधुग्भ्यो हवति ते ॥

Brāhmanical deities like Śakra and Brahmā were represented as the attendants of the Buddha (Mookerji, Harsha, p. 76).

2. Skanda, IV. i. 14. 47 (i).

3. Śiva P., IV. 14. 24(ii) : चन्द्रस्तु सर्वदा दुष्टो...

Ibid., IV. 14. 25-27 ff. Many vicious acts had been committed by the wicked Moon who had abducted Tārā, the wife of Brhaspati.

4. Skanda, VII. i. 18. 10.

Śaśikalā represents the Parā-Māyā or Śakti of Devadeva (Śiva) cf., Skanda, VII. i. 19. 23-25.

5. Ibid., VII. i. 18. 14-115.

6. Ibid., VII. i. 18. 17(i).

all, had been tarnished (sakalaṅko'yaṁ).¹ It was, his special liking for Rohiṇī that he neglected his other wives. He did not heed the warning of Dakṣa. Hence he was cursed by him. Soma suffered from the disease of yakṣmā. Skanda observes :

सर्वेषां वर्तते शंका यथा मम महेश्वर ।
 उत्पन्नं कारणं किं तद्येन सोमस्य लांछनम् ॥
 किमेतत्कारणं देव कथयस्व महेश्वर ॥
 अमृते संभवो यस्य कथं तस्यापि लांछनम् ॥
 प्रियश्च तव देवेश लांछनं चापि तिष्ठति ॥
 कौतूहलं परं देव तत्त्वं मे वक्तुमर्हसि ॥
 एवमुक्तः स पार्वत्या देवदेवो महेश्वरः ॥
 उवाच परमप्रीतः प्रेम्णा शैलसुतां प्रभुः ॥
 पितुस्तव प्रभावेन लांछनं शशिनोऽभवत् ॥
 भावित्वात्कर्मणो देवि दक्षस्याज्ञाव्यतिक्रमात् ॥
 संमं वर्तस्व भार्याभिरुत्तुक्तः शशलांछनः ॥²

Thus it explains the 'lāñchana'³ associated with candra. and we are reminded of the observations of Saint Tulasī-dāsa.⁴ Soma was really deified like the other deities⁵. He is equated with the God Nārāyaṇa⁶. The Varāha Purāṇa also mentions Soma-rāja as dvija-rāja⁷. Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa also calls king Soma as dvijeśa. But the Brāhmanical poet Bāṇa does not refer to Soma's Brāhmanical lineage. He uses the name Śaśāṅka in the derogatory sense and Yuan-Chwang follows him.

Thus the 'Gauḍādhīpa' Śaśāṅka was a ruler of great celebrity who championed the cause of Brāhmaṇas.

1. Skanda, VII. i. 19. 29—32.

2. Ibid., VII. i. 19. 35—40.

3. Ibid., VII. i. 19. 41.

4. Rāmācarita Mānasa, I. 3(ii) :

यमाश्रितो हि वक्रोऽपि चन्द्रः सर्वत्र वन्द्यते ।

5. Varāha P., Chapter 57 deals with Kānti-vratam based on the worship of Soma (Varāha P., 57. 5—12).

6. Ibid., 57. 13.

7. Ibid., 57. 16—17(i).

Himself a Brāhmaṇa, he is styled 'dvijēśa', dvija-pati or the king of Brāhmaṇas. Under his patronage the Purāṇas were redacted and it is for this reason that the Purāṇas shower much encomium on the personality of Soma.

The sage Atri and his wife named Bhadrā gave birth to famous son named Soma (bhadrāyām janayāmāsa somam putram yaśasvinam)¹. Soma-deva son of the sage Atri, was an illustrious ruler crowned as a king for the well-being of the whole world. He fostered the entire country which was free from the darkness dispelled by the lustre of the illustrious Soma². He established a large empire and performed the Rājāsūya sacrifice, and thus he attained the status of Adhirāja—the imperial dignity—recognised by the Brāhmaṇas.³ Soma was asked to honour the Brāhmaṇas who were the mainstay of the state and its stability depended on the goodwill of the learned Brāhmaṇas.⁴

1. Skanda, VII. i. 20. 44(i).

2. Ibid., VII. i. 20. 70—71(i) ; Harivaṁśa, Harivaṁśa P., XXV. 20—21.

3. Skanda., VII. i. 20. 74—77 :

समाजहे राजसूयं सहस्रशतदक्षिणम् ।
 हिरण्यगर्भश्चोद्गाता ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मत्वमेयिवान् ॥
 सदस्यस्तस्य भगवान्हरिर्नारायणः प्रभुः ।
 सनत्कुमारप्रमुखैराद्यैर्ब्रह्मर्षिभिवृत्तः ॥
 दक्षिणामददात्सोमस्त्रील्लोकांस्तु वरानने ।
 तेभ्यो ब्रह्मर्षिमुख्येभ्यः सदस्येभ्यश्च वै शुभे ॥
 प्राप्यावभृथमव्यग्रः सर्वदेवर्षिपूजितः ।
 अतिराजतिराजेन्द्रो दशधा भावयन्दिशः ॥

Harivaṁśa, Harivaṁśa Parva, XXV. 33—28.

4. Skanda, VII. i. 22. 62—103.

ŚAŚĀṆKA AND HIS COINS

उमयासहितं रुद्रं संतर्प्याध्वरकर्मणा ।
प्राप सोम इति ख्यातिं दत्तां सोमेन शंभुना ॥

The gold-coins issued by Śaśāṅka are the valuable source of his history. A few veiled references found in the Harṣacarita of Bāṇa or the observations of the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan-Chwang are inadequate. The former, a court-poet, is interested only in censuring the character of Śaśāṅka — the arch enemy of his patron. The latter, too, condemns the character of Śaśāṅka as a zealous enemy of Buddhism. Thus the statements of Bāṇa and Yuan-Chwang, the biased and prejudiced as they are, are too meagre to help in the reconstruction of the History of Śaśāṅka. Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūla Kalpa, a Buddhist text, undoubtedly gives valuable information relating to following facts :

- (i) Rājā Soma—an exalted hero and adherent to Brāhmaṇas (tīrthikasya vacce rataḥ):

सोमाख्योऽपि ततो राजा एक वीरो भविष्यति ।
गंगातीरपर्यन्तं वाराणस्यामतः परम् ॥
नाशयिष्यति दुर्मेधः शास्तुर्विम्बां मनोरमाम् ।
जिनैस्तु तु कथितं पूर्वं धर्मसेतुमनल्पकम् ॥
दाहापयति दुर्मेधः तीर्थिकस्य वच्चे रतः ।
ततोऽसौ क्रुद्धलुब्धस्तु मिथ्यामानी ह्यसंमतः ॥
विहारारामचैत्यांश्च निर्ग्रन्थां वसथां भुवि ।
भेत्स्यते च तदा सर्वा वृत्तिरोधमकारक ॥

It clearly shows that Rājā Soma had become a celebrated hero (ekaviro) in the Madhyadeśa or Dharmadeśa² where he tried to reestablish the glory of Brāhmaṇism by exterminating Pāṣaṇḍas — Buddhists and Jains. The region around Vārāṇasī on the Ganges was under his suzerainty.

1. MMK., p. 634.

2. Garuḍa P., II. 2. 9(2) :

कृष्णसारो मृगो यत्र धर्मदेशः स उच्यते ।

cf. Ibid., I. 93. 3—4.

Thus, when Śaśāṅka was trying to revive the glory of Brāhmanism in the Madhyadeśa, there appeared on the scene another king, Rakārādyā or Rājyavardhana. The Ārya Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa tells us about Rājyavardhana :

रकाराद्योतयुक्तात्मा वैश्यवृत्तिमचञ्चलः ।
शासनेऽस्मिं तथा शक्त सोमाख्यसमो नृप ।
सोऽपि याति तवान्तेन नग्नजातिनृपेण तु ॥¹

(ii) Rājyavardhana, a religious-minded man (yuktātma, acañcalaḥ) was equal to Soma (śakta somākhyā samo nṛpaḥ). He had an ally, a king of Nagnajāti. It is to be noted that Rājyavardhana is not styled ekavīra as was the case with Soma-rājā or Harṣa (Hakārākhyā ekavīro). It shows that Rājyavardhana was no match to Soma rājā. Rājyavardhana was a Buddhist styled Parama-saugata (Sugata iva)². His ally, Nagna-jāti-nṛpaḥ, was also a Buddhist, and a zealous champion of Buddhism :

नागराजा ततः श्रीमान् धर्मवत्सलः ।
येनास्य कारितं चैव शास्तुविम्बं मनोरमम् ।
विहारं कारितवाञ्छात् संघस्यार्थे तदा भुवि ॥³

Rājyavardhana as well as Harṣa were ruling over the country of Śrikanṭha :

ततः परेण भूपालो जाताना मनुजेश्वरौ ।
सप्तमष्टशता त्रीणि श्रीकण्ठवासिनस्तदा ।
आदित्य नामा वैश्यास्तु स्थानमीश्वरवासिनः ॥
भविष्यति न सन्देहो अन्ते सर्वत्र भूपतिः ॥
हकाराख्यो नामतः प्रोक्तो सार्वभूमिनराधिपः ॥⁴

Thus there was struggle for the supremacy of Madhyadeśa where Rājā Soma had gained celebrity. This struggle was further aggravated by the religious fervour among the champions of

1. MMK., p. 634.
2. Banskhera Copper Plate Ins., line 5.
3. MMK., III, p. 632.
4. Ibid., p. 626.

Brāhmanism and Buddhism. The coins of Śaśāṅka "have supplied certain interesting facts about the history of his reign,"¹ corroborated by the Purāṇic gleanings.

COINS OF ŚAŚĀṆKA

Śaśāṅka, as a crowned king, issued gold coins, which bear on the reverse his name 'Śrī-Śaśāṅkaḥ'. As an abhiṣikta ruler he had assumed the imperialistic title of 'Māhārājādhirāja', (Śrī Śaśāṅkarāja).² It has been stated above that he had performed the Rājasūya sacrifice and, thus, he was an 'adhirāja' — an independent ruler—a status which is proved by his coinage.

Śaśāṅka was undoubtedly a devout Śaiva ruler as we know from the Purāṇas. His coins also depict on the obverse Śaśāṅka (Moon or Candra), Śiva and Vṛṣa (Nandī).³

JAYĀBHIṢEKA-TYPE

OBVERSE—

Śiva, nimbate, is seated on Vṛṣa (Vṛṣāsanah) which is also seated.⁴ Both Śiva and Nandī are facing left where we find full moon. The left hand of Śiva is uplifted.

1. B. N. Srivastava, Śaśāṅka, p. 27 (wrongly numbered 27, the number found in the Journal of U. P. H. S.—Vol. X, Pt. I & II, New Series).
2. Ganjām Plates of the reign of Śaśāṅka, l. 3.
3. DKM., p. 258 : "This is confirmed by the account of Yuan Chwang, where we are told that Śaśāṅka wanted to remove the image of the Buddha and replace it by that of Śiva in the temple east of the Bodhi tree.
4. Dr. B. N. Srivastava (Śaśāṅka, Appendix) observes that Śiva stands reclining on his bull. But both Śiva and the bull are seated. The bull is clearly depicted as seated in his own photographs as well as in those of Allan (CCGD., Plate XXIII, figs., 14—16). Śiva is also seated on his vāhana. Allan takes Śiva as reclining. Smith (C.C.A.I., Vol. I, p. 121) refers to bull, 'couchant and in his photograph (Pl. XVI, 12) Śiva is clearly represented as seated or reclining on the bull with his face turned to right. It depicts Vṛṣāsanah Śivaḥ present before (pratyakṣah) Śaśāṅka — represented as Moon in the coin.

It has legends : Śrīśa jaya (= Śrī + Īśa = Śrīśa jaya) i. e. victory to Śrī Īśa (Śiva).

REVERSE—

Goddess Lakṣmī nimbate¹ facing is seated on lotus. She is holding lotus in her left hand. On either side she is bathed by an elephant.

Legend — Śrī Śaśāṅkaḥ.

What has been depicted on the obverse and on the reverse sides of the gold coins of Śaśāṅka is to be viewed in the light of the Purāṇic gleanings. As stated above Soma-rājā worshipped Śiva who was pleased to recognise blotted Moon as a representation of Śiva himself :—

विष्णुसन्निध्यमप्यत्र सदैव निवसाम्यहम् ।

विशेषतस्त्वदीयेऽस्मिन्नद्य प्रभृति गोपते ।

ममैवान्या परा मूर्तिस्त्वं शशांक न संशयः ॥¹

Thus the moon represented on the obverse represents, Soma-rājā, who had performed great penances to propitiate Śiva.² Pleased by his devotion (tuṣṭo Maheśvaraḥ) appeared before him :

प्रत्यक्षः सोमराजस्य वृषासन उमापतिः ॥³

Umāpati seated on his bull appeared in the sight of Soma-rājā. The coin has faithfully translated the scene portrayed on the obverse of his coins. When Śiva appeared before Soma-rājā who had performed severe penances, the latter began to recite the prayer in the honour of his master bowing low to him :—

प्रत्यक्षः सोमराजस्य वृषासन उमापतिः ।

साष्टांगं प्रणिपत्योच्चैर्जय शंभो नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ 17

जय शंकर पापहराय नमो जय ईश्वर ते जगदीश नमः ॥

जय वासुकिभूषणधार नमो जय शूलकपालधराय नमः ॥ 18

जय आदिरनादिरन्त नमो जय शंकर किकरमीश भज ॥⁴ 20

1. Varāha P., 144. 26.

2. Skanda, V. iii. 85. 16.

3. Ibid., V. iii. 85. 17(i).

4. Ibid., V. iii. 85. 17—20.

Thus we can interpret the legend on the obverse — श्रीश जय or 'श्री ईश जय' as representing the prayer of Soma-rājā to Vṛṣāṣana-Umāpati. By the grace of Śiva, Soma-rājā¹ regained his lost lustre (prabhayā pūrṇaḥ)² and thus he became priyadarśanaḥ.³

What is the significance of the uplifted hand of Śiva? In the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāmana I we are told that the Śaka Mahākṣatrapa (Rudradāmana I) had earned the affection of Dharma by raising his hand.⁴

Thus the raised hand of Śiva exhibits his attachment and devotion to Dharma.

VṚṢA

But the historians have taken no cognisance of the bull or Nandī which represents Dharma.⁵ The bull is styled mahāvṛṣa or Dharma.⁶

Thus the obverse-features of the gold coins of Śaśāṅka Viz., Soma and Someśvara seated on vṛṣa with his raised hand exhibit their attachment to Dharma which found a saviour in the person of Śaśāṅka.

REVERSE—

Goddess Lakṣmī nimbate seated facing on lotus, holding lotus in her left hand and with outstretched right hand empty; above, on either side, an elephant sprinkling water over her (abhiṣeka) legend — Śrī Śaśāṅkaḥ.⁷

The reverse side of the gold coin of Śaśāṅka represents Somābhiṣeka at Vārāṇasī (the city of Kāśirāja, Śiva, represented on the obverse) where he had performed Rājasūya sacrifice. In the Śrutis there are three ceremonies for consecrating heads of

1. Skanda, V. iii. 190. 2, 3.

2. Ibid., V. iii. 190. 16.

3. Ibid., V. iii. 190. 19.

4. Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradamana I, lines 12—13 :

हस्तोच्छ्राजितोजित धर्मानुरागेन ।

5. V. Dh., III. 49. 18(ii).

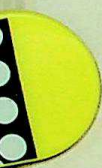
6. Ibid I. 28. 13(ii) ;

7. Allan, CCGD., p. 147 ; Plate XXIII, figs. 14—16.

COINS OF ŚAŚĀṆKA

प्रत्यक्षः सोमराजस्य वृषासनः
नागास्त्वामभिषिञ्चन्तु





society. There is the first and foremost, the Rājasūya or the inauguration of a king,..... The normal ceremony of coronation, however, is the Rājasūya :

राज्ञ एव राजसूयम् । राजा वै राजसूयेनेष्ट्वावा भवति ।

"To the king doubtless belongs the Rājasūya, for by offering the Rājasūya he becomes king."¹ Dr. Jayaswal observes :

The Rājasūya is comprised of three distinct parts ; the first is a series of preliminary sacrifices, the second is the Abhiṣecanīya, 'the sprinkling' or the anointing, the third is a number of post-anointing ceremonies. Out of the three the Abhiṣecanīya is the most important ; and, perhaps, in practice the rites and formulæ of it alone were considered indispensable at normal coronations It is only after the sprinkling stage that he is called 'king' before that he is an ordinary citizen."² All the people, now, recognised him their ruler.³ Thus the Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅkadeva was crowned as the rājarāja (adhirāja) being sprinkled by elephants :

नागास्त्वामभिषिञ्चन्तु राजराज्येन पार्थिव ।⁴

It marked the victorious career of a sovereign ruler.⁵ At the end of the ceremony he was blessed by the people :

एतैर्यथोक्तैर्नृप राजराज्ये दत्ताभिषेकः पृथिवीं समग्राम् ।

ससागरां भुङ्क्व चिरं च जीव धर्मं च ते बुद्धिरतीव चास्तु ॥⁶

Thus Śaśāṅka, crowned as a king, was asked to protect Dharma (dharme ca te buddhi-ratīva-cāstu).

JAYĀBHIṢEKA

The Liṅga Purāṇa describes the rite of Jayābhiṣeka which was formerly recounted by Īśa to Manu, for the welfare of kings.⁷

1. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, pp. 192-193
cf. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, V. i. 1. 12.
2. H. P., p. 193.
3. V. Dh., II. 21. 24, Chapters 21 and 22 describe in detail, the performance of Rājasūyābhiṣeka-vidhi.
4. Ibid., II. 22. 98.
5. Ibid., II. 22. 117(ii).
6. Ibid., II. 22. 185.
7. Liṅga P., II. 27. 2 :

जयाभिषेक ईशेन कथितो मनवे पुरा ।

हिताय मेरुशिखरे क्षत्रियाणां त्रिशूलिना ॥

It is mentioned to be conducive to the victory over enemies. This rite was to be performed just before the march of a king's army for the conquest of different countries.¹ While performing this ablution rite, sacred water was sprinkled over the lord and then he went to the battle-field.² The ceremony consisted of the worship of Śiva and sixteen Śaktis. These Śaktis were to be two armed holding the lotus and the conch, wearing red garlands, clothes, ornaments and jewels.³

King the favourite devotee of Śiva, also performed Homa (juhuyād agnau bhūpatiḥ Śiva-vatsalaḥ) with his salutations to the Lord :

ईशानः सर्वविद्यानामीश्वरः सर्वभूतानां ब्रह्माधिपतिर्ब्रह्मणोऽधिपतिर्ब्रह्मा शिवो मे अस्तु सदा शिवोम् ॥⁴

At the end of the ceremony the king was sprinkled with the water from the Śiva-kumbha.⁵ This rite of Jayābhiṣeka leads to the attainment of the status of a sovereign ruler.⁶ Thus the gold coins of Śaśāṅka with Soma-Someśvara and Mahāvṛṣa on the obverse and the depiction of Gajalakṣmī⁷ on the reverse represent the performance of the rite of Jayābhiṣekaṁ or Jayasecanam the performance of which had brought Śakratvam to Indra. By performing this rite Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Ambikā, Sāvitrī and Lakṣmī, too, had attained the positions of supremacy.⁵ Wonderful indeed is the glory of this Abhiṣeka whereby a king is liberated from sins and from ailments. He becomes victorious always. He

1. *Linga P.*, II. 27. 10—11 :

जयाभिषेकमखिलमवदत्परमेश्वरः ।

श्री भगवानुवाच—जयाभिषेकं वक्ष्यामि नृपाणां हितकाम्यया ॥

अपमृत्युजयार्थं च सर्वं शत्रुजयाय च ।

युद्धकाले तु संप्राप्ते कृत्वैवमभिषेचनम् ॥

2. *Ibid.*, II. 27. 12 ; The whole of this chapter describes the mode (vidhi) of the performance of this rite.

3. *Linga P.*, II. 27. 229—231.

4. *Ibid.*, II. 27. 256.

5. *Ibid.*, II. 27. 264.

6. *Ibid.*, II. 27. 272.

7. *Ibid.*, II. 27. 272—280.

is richly endowed with the love of the people like another Indra.¹ From the Harṣacarita of Bāṇa we know that Harṣa also performed such ceremony before he set out for his conquests :

अथ व्यतीतेषु च कपुचिद्विसेषु...सुप्रशस्तेऽहनि दत्ते च चतसृणामपि दिशां
विजययोग्ये दण्डयात्रालम्ने सलिलमोक्षविशारदैः शारदेरिवाम्भोधरैः—शातकुम्भैश्च
कुम्भैः स्नात्वा विरचय्य परमया भक्त्या भगवतो नीललोहितस्यार्चामदक्षिणं हुत्वा...
गमनमंगलप्रतिसरं प्रकोष्ठे परिपूजितप्रहृष्टपुरोहितकरप्रकीर्णमाणशान्तिमलिल-
शीकराम्युक्षितशिराः...अष्टादशद्वीपजेतव्याधिकारे दक्षिणभुजस्तम्भमहमहमिकया
सेवकैरिव...। प्रमुदितप्रजाजन्यमान जयशब्दकोलाहलो...।²

“Some days having passed, on a day.....was fixed an hour of marching suitable for the subjugation of all the four quarters. The king had bathed in gold and silver vessels, like autumn clouds which were skilled in pouring water ; had with deep devotion offered worship to the adorable Nilalohita, fed the up-flaming fire,.....sat upon a throne.....duly anointed.....After being sprinkled on the head with a spray of lustral water scattered by the hand of the highly honoured and delighted Purohita..... Finally.....amid a clamorous cry of victory from delighted people he issued forth from his house.....”³

Thus it is evident that the rite of Jayābhiṣeka was in vogue in the age, when Śaśāṅka was duly anointed by Brāhmaṇas as their lord who appeared as the champion of Dharma. The Lakṣmī on the reverse represents Rāja-lakṣmī.⁴

1. Liṅga P., II. 27. 281—283.

2. Harṣacarita, VII, PP. 273—274 (Bombay S. P. Series, Fuhrer, 1909).

3. Harṣacarita, Translation (Cowell and Thomas, 1897)
Chapter VII, PP. 196—197.

4. Devi Bhāg., IX. 39. 18(i).

CHAPTER V

KING ĀMA (NĀGABHATA II) OF KĀNYAKUBJA-DEŚA

When a strong power from centre is withdrawn disintegration and anarchy follows. It happened after the death of Yaśovarman, the great ruler of Kānyakubja-deśa. While dealing with the successors of Yaśovarman Dr. Tripathi observes : "We are left to grope in the dark after Yaśovarman except for the uncertain light thrown by Jain sources which allege that he was succeeded by his son Āma.....Āma was succeeded by his son, the immoral Dunduka,.....who was murdered by his son Bhoja. After this event we have no information whatsoever. We cannot give much credence to these tales based on tradition and more concerned with religious edification than with the narration of sober facts of history with some respect for chronology. But as there is nothing to contradict them, we may with S. P. Pandit say for the present that 'all the credit that the Jain stories have a right to claim is that king Āma was perhaps the son of Yaśoarman, that Dunduka was Āma's son, and that Bhoja was the son of Dunduka.'"¹

Dr. Tripathi concludes that "one of them achieved anything of note, and one was even prematurely murdered. We may, therefore, well believe that if they really had historical existence, their combined reigns must have been of extremely short duration — say between 15 and 20 years."² These observations of Dr. Tripathi are based on the Jain stories summarised by S. P. Pandit in his introduction to *Gauḍavāho* or on the assessment of the *Bappabhaṭṭicarita* by Dr. Krisnaswami Aiyangar.³ He himself did not care to read the Jain stories in original, as the gleanings

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1. T. H. K., pp. 211—212
for S. P. Pandit's views, cf *Gauḍavāho*, introduction, p. clix.
 2. T. H. K., p. 212.
 3. J. B. B. R. A. S., Vol. III, pp. 101—103.

from these stories would show that king Āma was a great conqueror, an ideal ruler and a good administrator.

Dr. Tripathi did not consider the evidence of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī which clearly tells us that Lalitāditya had uprooted Yaśovarman entirely (Yaśovarman-nṛpaṁ taṁ ca samūlāmudapātayāt). The victorious armies went triumphantly across the realm of Kānyakubja ruled by Yaśovarman (Kānyakubjorvī.....yaśovar māṇam ullāṅghya) towards Eastern Sea.²

Rājatarāṅgiṇī tells us that the "land of Kānyakubja with its villages" (sagrāmāṁ Kānyakubjorvīm) was granted by the king Lalitāditya to the shrine of Āditya which he erected at Lalitapura³. Thus this crushing defeat inflicted upon Yaśovarman, king of Kanauj between 736 and 747 A. D. shows that Yaśovarman's "power was utterly broken by Lalitāditya, and he fades out of history."⁵

Thus the death of Yaśovarman marks the political disintegration of Kanauj, and according to Rājatarāṅgiṇī Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Yaśovormān defeated the king of Kānyakubja in battle and carried off his throne the ensign of royal power.⁶ Kalhaṇa has not named the defeated king of Kānyakubja. It shows the period of distress and darkness in the political history of Kanauj after the death of Yaśovarman. According to Smith "The occupant of the throne of Kanauj apparently was Vajrāyudha, who like his predecessor, suffered the fate of defeat

1. R. T. IV. 140.

2. Ibid., IV. 145—146 ; Cl. A., p. 131.

3. Ibid., IV. 187.

The reference to 'sagrāmāṁ Kānyakubjorvīm' is very important ; as it refers to the country of Kānyakubja comprising 36 lakhs of villages (Skanda, I. ii. 39. 129b).

4. Smith, E.H.I., p. 386, note 2.

5. Cl. A., p. 131.

6. R. T., IV. 471 :

सिंहासनं जितादाजौ कन्यकुब्ज महीभुजः ।

स राज्यकुदं राना जहारोदारपोषः ॥

and dethronement by Jayāpīḍa.”¹ According to Dr. D. C. Ganguli this king of Kānyakubja defeated by Jayāpīḍa was Indrarāja.² Dr. Tripathi following the track laid by Smith holds : “We further learn on the authority of Kalhaṇa that Jayāpīḍa Vinayāditya (779-810 A. D.).....after defeating the king of Kānyakubja in battle carried off his throne the ensign of royal power. Evidently we have an allusion to the defeat and dethronement of a king of Kanauj, and and he is perhaps to be identified with Vajrāyudha,³ assuming that the attack on Kanauj took place soon after Jayāpīḍa became king of Kashmir. But if it occurred later in his career, the vanquished Kanauj monarch must have been Indrāyudha.”⁴ But Dr. Tripathi, who holds that Āma was the successor of Yaśovarman and the former was succeeded by Dunduka, does not consider the claims of Āma and Dunduka to suffer the defeat at the hands of Kashmirian king Jayāpīḍa. The youngest grandson of Lalitāditya,⁵ Jayāpīḍa became ruler only after about twelve years and seven months.⁶ Thus Āma and Dunduka, if they were really the son and grandson respectively of Yaśovarman, should have been considered by Tripathi. The Jain sources and the Skanda Pnrāṇa maintain that the king Āma

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1. Smith, E. H. I., p. 392, and also note 4 there.
 2. A. I. K., p. 115.
 3. Pires, (The Mankharis, p. 146) also holds the same view. He observes that, It is impossible to place vajrāyudha anywhere except between Yaśovarman and Indrāyudha (the Mankharis, P. 149, note 3).
 4. T. H. K., p. 213.
 5. R. T., IV, 359.
 6. Ibid., IV. 392—402

Kuvalayāpīḍa ruled for one and half year, (R. T., IV. 392) ; Vajrāditya was on the throne for 7 years (R. T., IV. 398) ; Pṛthvīpīḍ ruled for 4 years and one month (R. T., IV. 399). and Saṃgrāmāpīḍa (I) was king for only 7 days.

of Kanauj was a great ruler. Hence he cannot be accepted as the son and successor of Yaśovarman.

ĀMA — THE GREAT RULER OF KĀNYAKUBJA-DEŚA

While describing the evils of Kali-age, the Skanda Purāṇa refers to a powerful ruler of Kānyakubja (deśa) named Āma (Kānyakubjādhipo bali rājyaṃ prakurute tatra Āmo namnā hi bhūtale)¹. King Āma (Āmo nāmā mahipatiḥ) is also deprecated as sinful ruler (rājānaṃ pāpa-kāriṇaṃ) ;² though he was a pious king (dharmiṣṭha) in the beginning. It was due to change in his religious policy. At first, in the early part of his reign, he was the follower of Trayī-dharma. But later on under the influence of a Jain ascetic (kṣapaṇaka) he embraced Jainism after abandoning Viṣṇu-dharma. The royal court of Kānyakubja was dominated by Jains. It antagonised Brāhmaṇas. Thus once again after the death of Śaśaṅka, Kānyakubja witnessed sectarian rivalry, at a time when the Mlecchas, Asuras, Tājikas and Turuṣkas threatened the country and its culture.

The Skanda Purāṇa, however, does not refer to the dynasty or family to which Āma belonged. It mentions his son-in-law named Kumārapāla who was zealous champion of Jainism. He was a ruler of Dharmāraṇya situated to the west of Mahiṣāgara (Gulf of Cambay) in Western India.

While describing the achievements of Nāgabhaṭa II, the Pratihāra ruler, K. M. Munshi observes that, "Various legends concerning Nāgabhaṭa show that during his reign the whole of northern Gujarat up to Kaira was an integral part of the Pratihāra empire. According to a Brāhmanical tradition, Āma, the ruler of Kanauj, who lived at Gwalior, drove out the king of Kheṭakapura, then the capital of north Gujarat, and occupied his land. From Prabhāvakacarita, a Jain work, we learn that Nāgabhaṭa of Kanauj, the grandfather of Bhoja, was known as Āma and that he visited Prabhāsa to worship the god Someśvara.....,"³

1. Skanda P., III. ii. 36. 34.

2. Ibid., III. ii. 37. 11.

3. Munshi, Gl. G. D., Vol. I. p. 89.

Munshi has not mentioned the Brāhmanical tradition¹ cited above. Prabhāvakacarita does not refer to Āma as Nāgabhaṭa. On the otherhand, the Jain work refers to Āma, as the son and successor of Yaśovarman of Kanauj—the view accepted by Dr. R. S. Tripathi.² Dr. A. D. Pusalkar identified Āma with Vatsarāja, the Pratihāra ruler.³ Thus the identity of Āma is shrouded in mystery.

ĀMA AND BAPPABHAṬṬI-CARITA

The biography of a famous Jain ācārya and ascetic named Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri called Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri-carita is found in the Prabandhakośa⁴ of Rājāśekhara Sūri (cf. Prabandha IX, pp. 46-54) and in the Prabhāvaka-Carita (XI). The Bappabhaṭṭi-Sūri-Carita throws important light on the history of Kanauj from the reign of Yaśovarman to that of Bhoja. During this period Yaśovarman, his son Āma, Dunduka, son of Āma, and Bhoja the son of Dunduka ruled over Kānyakubja-deśa, history of which is also associated with the history of Gauḍa ruled by king Dharma.

Bappabhaṭṭi, who was born in Pañcāla-deśa,⁵ was initiated into Jainism in 807 V.E.⁶ (Vikrama Era, = 751 A.D.) He happened to meet, by coincidence, Āma who was the son of king Yaśovarman of Kānyakubja born of his queen named Suyāśādevī at Gopālagiri (Gwalior). There are two versions in this story as to how Āma had to leave his ancestral capital :

1. Gl. G. D., pp, 203, 211.
2. THK., p. 212.
3. AIK., p. 289 ; Vatsarāja (or Āma, as he is called in Jain Prabandhas).....”
4. Prabandhakośa, Singhī Jain Jñānapīṭha, Viśvabhāratī, Śāntiniketana, 1935.
5. Prab. K., IX. p. 26.
6. Ibid., IX. p. 27, 62 :

शताष्टके वत्सराणां गते विक्रमकालतः ।

सप्ताधिके राक्षशुक्ल तृतीयादिवसे गुरौ ।

दीक्षा दत्ता वप्पभट्टिः..... ।

Prabha. Carita, XI, p. 80/29 (XI. 29).

- (i) According to the first version, Āma himself told Bappa-bhaṭṭi :

असौ जगाद—भगवन् ! कन्यकुब्जदेशे गोपालगिरिदुर्गनगरे यशोवर्मनृपतेः सुयशादेवीकुक्षिजन्मा नन्दनोऽहम् । यौवने च निरर्गल धन लीलया व्ययन् पित्रा कुपितेन शिक्षित—वत्स धनाजंकस्य कृच्छ्रमस्थानव्ययी पुत्रो न वेत्ति तातस्य । मितव्ययो भव । ततोऽहं कोपादिहागमम् । गुरुवोऽप्यूचुः—किं ते नाम ? तेन खटिकया भुवि लिखित्वा दर्शितम्—‘आम’ इति ।¹

According to this version Āma left Kanauj in the prime of his youth, when he was advised by Yaśovarman not to be extravagant.

- (ii) According to the second version Suyāśādevī, mother of Āma, told the Jain ascetic that her character was tarnished by the connivance of the co-wife of Yaśovarman who turned her out of his home, when Āma was lying in her womb. consequently she was living on the products of forest along with her son (Āma), roaming in forests :

अहं राजपुत्री कन्यकुब्जेश यशोवर्मपत्नी सुयशा नाम । अहमस्मिन्सुते गर्भस्थे सति.....क्रूरया सपत्न्या मिथ्या परपुरुषमारोप्य गृहान्निष्कासिता ।.....भ्रमन्तीह समागता वन्यवृत्त्या जीवामि बालं च पालयामि ।²

The second version seems to be based on the story of Uttara Rāmacarita where Bhavabhūti portrays the life of Sītā exiled by Rāma. There is contradiction in the Jain versions itself. According to the first version Āma passed his early life of boyhood in the royal palace which he left in his youth.

Further, we are told that the queen resided in the Jain monastery at Modhera in Gujarat. Later on she was recalled to Kanauj ; and Āma was crowned as a king by Yaśovarman who instructed him on the art of government.³ According to the Jain

1. Prab. K., IX. 62, p. 27.

Prabhāvakā Carita, p. 81. XI. 47 :

कन्यकुब्जयशोवर्मभूपतेः सुयशोऽङ्गभूः ।

पित्रा शिक्षावशात् किञ्चिदुक्तः कोपादिहागमम् ॥

2. Prab. K., IX. 63 (p. 27).

Prabhāvakā Carita, XI. 53—55.

3. Prabandha K., IX. 63—65.

Prabhāvakā Carita, XI. 56—57, 76—77.

tradition recorded here Yaśovarman himself was a Jain and gave up his life in accordance with the tenets of Jainism :

एतत्कृत्वा यशोवर्मा अर्हन्तम् त्रिधा शुद्ध्या शरणं श्रयन् द्यां गतः ।²

ĀMA AND THE JAINISM

Soon after, King Āma appointed Bappabhaṭṭi as the royal preceptor (Sūri or guru) about 811 V. E. (= 754 A. D.)². Directed by Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri Āma caused to be built a magnificent Jain temple at Gopagiri (Gwalior) where the king had been going to pay his respects to the chaitya. Thus the growing influence of Jain ascetics in the court of king Āma estranged Brāhmaṇas who exclaimed :

तद् दृष्ट्वा विप्रैः क्रुधा ज्वलितैर्भूपो विज्ञप्तः देव ! श्वेताम्बरा अमी शूद्राः ।
एभ्यः सिंहासनं किम् ।³

It enraged the Jain Sūri styled Surīndra,⁴ probably Indra-Sūri of the Skanda purāṇa.

From the Skanda purāṇa also we learn that king Āma renounced Vaiṣṇavism and accepted the teachings of Jain Dharma. Consequently his people also embraced Jainism. A Jain ascetic Indra Sūri came to his court from some other country (probably from Gujarat) and under his influence Āma married his daughter, Ratnagaṅgā, to Kumārapāla (Kumbhipāla) of Dharmāranya. Kumārapāla was a staunch supporter of Jainism. He denounced Brāhmaṇas and Brāhmanism (Vedic Dharma) based on the sacrifices. He deprecated Brāhmanical deities. Thus Brāhmaṇas, estranged by Kumārapāla and King Āma, sought the divine help of

1. Prabandha K., IX. 65. p. 28. ll. 24—25.

2. prabandha K., IX. 67. 7 :

एकादशाधिके तत्र जाते वर्षशताष्टके ।

विक्रमात्सोऽभवत्सूरिः कृष्णचैत्राष्टमी दिने ।

3. Ibid., IX. 68. p. 29.

4. Ibid., IX. 68, line 26 :

प्रत्युषे सूरिन्द्रेण तद् दृष्ट्वा राज्ञोऽग्रे पठितम् ।...

Rāmacandra and Hanumān. They succeeded in gaining the favour of the latter

The Skanda Purāṇa tells us that the Brāhmaṇas entreated King Āma not to follow the heretics, but all in vain. They went to Rāmasetu. In the way, they met Hanumān who consoled them. Hanumān also gave them two small packets.

When the Brāhmaṇas returned to Kānyakubja, they again asked the king to respect the Brāhmaṇas and the charters granted to them by Rāmacandra. But the king jeered at them. Then, the Brāhmaṇas threw one of the two packets given by Hanumān to them. It caused terrible fire which brought the king to his senses. The Jain ascetics fled in terror. The king fell on the feet of the Brāhmaṇas who regained their power and privileges. The king reposed his faith in the Brāhmaṇas and, once again, he became a devotee of Rāma. Thus the Viṣṇu-dharma (Rāma-bhakti) triumphed in the court of King Āma of Kānyakubja.¹

Whatever be the merits of the story, there is some truth in it and that is the sectarian rivalry between Brāhmanism and the heretic faiths of Jainism and Buddhism. Kumārāpāla praised the tenets of Jainism based on non-violence and deprecated the Brāhmaṇas devoted to Yajña-dharma based on animal-slaughter.² The Brāhmaṇas commended the principle of ahimsā but they denied the principle of himsā involved in the performance of the

1. Skanda P., III. ii, chapters 36—38.

2. Ibid., III. ii. 36. 62—64 :

त्यजामि ब्राह्मणान्यज्ञे पशुहिंसापरायणान् ।

तस्माद्धि हिंसकानां तु न मे भक्तिर्भवेद्विजाः ॥

अहिंसा परमो धर्मो अहिंसा च परं तपः ।

अहिंसा परमं ज्ञानमहिंसा परमं फलम् ॥

Vedic rituals with the observation^{1a}—‘Vaidiki himsā himsā na bhavati’ — the doctrine preached by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. Thus the Skanda Purāṇa supports the account of Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri Carita relating to the activities of Jain and Buddhist philosophers in the court of Āma.

PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER OF ĀMA-RĀJA

According to the Jain writers Āma Rāja was a great ruler, who had learnt seventytwo arts (kalāḥ). These are : Likhitam (writing), Gaṇitam (mathematics), Gitam (vocal music, i. e. singing), Nṛtyam (dancing), Paṭhitam (reading), Vādyam (instrumental music), Vyākaraṇam (grammar), Chanda (prosody), Jyotiṣa (astronomy), Śikṣā (one of the six Vedāṅgas), Niruktaṁ (etymology), Kātyāyanam (grammar of Kātyāyana), Nighaṇṭu (glossary of words), Patracchedyam (leaf-cutting, a kind of sport), Nakha-chedyam, Ratna-parikṣā (testing of jewels), Āyudhyābhyaśa (training in the use of weapons Gajārohaṇam (elephant-riding), Turagārohaṇam (horse-riding), ‘tayoḥ Śikṣā (knowledge of elephants and horses relating to their breed etc., viz., Gajāśāstra and Gajāyurveda as well as Aśvaśāstra and Hayāyurveda, Mantravāda, Yantravāda, Rasavāda, Khanyavāda, Rasāyanam (chemistry), Vijñānam, Tarkavāda (logic), Siddhānta, Viśavāda, Gāruḍam, Śākunaṁ, Vaidyakam, Ācārya-Vidyā, Āgama, Prāsāda-lakṣaṇam (architecture), Sāmudrikam (science of palmistry), Smṛti, Purāṇam, Itihāsa, Veda, Vidhi (Law and administration),

1. Skanda p., III. iii. 36. 68—73(i) :

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः सत्यमेतत्त्वयोदितम् ।
परं तथापि धर्मोऽस्ति शृणुष्वैकाग्रमानसः ॥
या वेदविहिता हिंसा सा न हिंसेति निर्णयः ।
शस्त्रेणाहन्यते यच्च पीडा जंतुषु जायते ॥
स एवाधर्म एवास्ति लोके धर्मविदां वर ।
वेश्मन्त्रैर्विहन्यते विना शस्त्रेण जंतवः ॥
जंतुपीडाकरा नैव सा हिंसा सुखदायिनी ।
परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥
वेदोदितां विद्यायापि हिंसांपापैर्न लिप्यते ।

Vidyānuvāda, Darśana-saṁskāra, Khecari-kalā, Amarīkalā, Indrajāla, Pātālasiddhi, Dhūrtaśambalaṁ, Gandhavāda, Vṛkṣa-cikitsā, Kṛtrima-maṇikarma, Sarvakarṇi, Vāsyakarma, Paṇakarma, Citrakarma, Kāṣṭhaghaṭanaṁ (wooden architecture), Pāṣāṇa-karma (stone-architecture), Lepakarma (plastering), Charma-karma, Yantraka-rasavatī, Kāvyaṁ (poetry), Alamkāra, Hasitaṁ, Saṁskṛtaṁ, Prākṛtaṁ, Paiśācikaṁ, Apabhraṁśaṁ, Kapaṭaṁ, Deśabhāṣā, Dhātu-karma, Prayogopāyaḥ (prayogāṇām upāyāḥ) and Kevalī-vidhiḥ.

Āma is stated to have learnt all these (seventytwo) arts. He was, thus, an enlightened ruler devoted to various modes of life and thought. As such he got a suitable associate in the person of Bappabhaṭṭi.

एताः सकलाः कलाः शिक्षितवान् । लक्षणतर्कादि-ग्रन्थान् परिचितवान् ।
वप्पभट्टिना साकमस्थिमज्जन्यायेन प्रीतिं वद्ववान् ।¹

He enjoyed the company of learned men.² It is evident that Āma had learnt different branches of learning. Khāravela, Rudradāmana I, Samudragupta, Harṣa and other great rulers³ of ancient India were great patrons of learning and were themselves learned rulers. Āma, too, was such a great ruler.

ĀMA — A GREAT RULER

Thus Āma Rāja, like the other enlightened kings of ancient India, was a great ruler, both as a man and as a heroic warrior (Āma-nāmā nṛpaḥ Śrīmān atimānava-vikramaḥ).³

A Large Army.

He had a large army consisting of 2 lakhs of horses, 1400 elephants, 1400 chariots, and one crore of foot-soldiers (infantry). Such was the mighty force of king Āma⁴ who had been equated

1. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 63, p. 28.

2. Prabhāvakā Carita, XI. 61—74 :

एवंविधकलानां द्वासप्ततिमधीतवान् ।

अनन्यसदृशः कोविदानां पर्वदि सोऽभवत् ।

3. Ibid., XI. 79, p. 82, 1—19.

with the royal splendour of Rāma (evam rājyaśrī Śrī Āmasya nyāya-Rāmasya).¹ Verily, he was Rāma of his own age.² Thus King Āma, cannot be regarded as weakling who succeeded Yaśovarman.

BAPPABHAṬṬI AND KING DHARMA OF GAUḌA

From the Jain works under review, we learn that king Āma of Kanauj and the Buddhist king Dharma (evidently Dharmapāla) of Gauḍa were contemporaneous rulers.

The dominance of Jainism in the court of king Āma and the exaltation of Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri as the royal preceptor led to disrespectful attitude of the king towards Brāhmaṇas. Brāhmaṇas openly warned the king in the court not to shower excessive favour on heretics :

प्रातर्नृपो मौलमनह्यं स्वं सिंहासनं सूरये निवेशापयति । तद् दृष्ट्वा विप्रैः
क्रुधा ज्वलितैर्भूपो विज्ञप्तः—देव ! श्वेताम्बरा अमी शूद्राः । एभ्यः सिंहासनं किम् ।
अथास्तां तत् । परं हृसीयो भवतु । मुहुर्मुहस्तैरित्थं विज्ञप्त्या कदर्थ्यमानः पार्थिवो
मौलसिंहासनं कोशगं कारयित्वाऽन्यत्नध्वारुरूपतः प्रत्यूषे सूरिन्द्रेण तद् दृष्ट्वा रुष्टेनैव
राजोऽग्रे पठितम् ।³

It led to the alienation of Bappabhaṭṭi who left the court of king Āma in disgust.⁴ He went to Gauḍa, where he graced the court of king Dharma in the city of Lakṣaṇāvati. Here he met Vākpatirāja (Kavirāja). King Dharma extended his patronage to Bappabhaṭṭi who was introduced to royal court by Vākpatirāja. Dharma, the king of Gauḍa, paid great respect to Bappabhaṭṭi, the ācārya of Āmarāja.⁵

1. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 65, p. 28, ll. 26—27.

2. Ibid., IX. 106, p. 36. l. 26 :

त्वमप्यैदं युगीननृपेषु तत्तुल्यः (रामतुल्यः) ।

3. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 68, p. 29, ll. 22—26.

Prabhāvakā Carita, XI. 142—146.

4. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 71—74

Prabhāvakā Carita XI. 160—161.

5. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 75. p. 30. ll. 20—23.

Prabhāvakā Carita, XI. 181—186.

ĀMARĀJA AND DHARMA (KING OF GAUḌA)

Bappabhaṭṭi's departure from Kānyakubja to the capital of Gauḍa led to struggle between Āmarāja and Dharma. Both of them were hostile to each other.¹ Āma is mentioned to have gone to Lakṣaṇāvati.²

BAPPABHAṬṬI AND A BUDDHIST LOGICIAN

In the court of King Dharma, there was a debate between a Buddhist philosopher named Vardhana-kuñjara and the Jain ācārya, Bappabhaṭṭi. The former was defeated and according to the terms and conditions of the debate King Dharma had to surrender his kingdom to Āma (Dharमेṇa saptaṅgaṃ rājyaṃ Āmāya datam). But at the instance of Bappabhaṭṭi, Āma returned it to Dharma.³ The presence of a Buddhist philosopher in the court of King Dharma leads to the identification of Gauḍa-monarch to his namesake, Dharmapāla, who was a great Buddhist ruler. Dr. Tripathi or others who take Āma to be the son and successor of Yaśovarman have not considered the contemporaneity of Āma with king Dharma or Dharmapāla. We know that Dharmapāla had to fight against Nagabhaṭa II and his grandson Bhoja I of the Pratihāra dynasty. Thus Bhoja of Bappabhaṭṭi-Sūri-Carita cannot be taken to be the last ruler of Yaśovarman's family about whom we know nothing.

The accounts of Yaśovarman, and Āma are much confused. Yaśovarman, and Vākpatirāja are stated to be contemporaries of Dharma. Yaśovarman is mentioned to have invaded Gauḍa-deśa, a fact which is corroborated by the Gauḍavāho of Vākpatirāja. But Vākpatirāja had not named the ruler of Gauḍadeśa defeated by Yaśovarman. On the other hand, according to the Bappabhaṭṭi-Sūri-Carita Yaśovarman defeated Dharma of Gauḍa. Yaśovarman's court-poet Vākpatirāja is stated to be the

1. Prabhāvaka Carita, XI. 168 :

पर मेस्त्यामराजेन दुर्ग्रहो विग्रहाग्रहः ।

2. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 76—96.

3. Ibid., IX. 76. p. 30. ll. 30—31.

Prabhāvaka Carita XI. 186—188.

contemporary of Āma and Dharma also. Thus the chronological position of the different personalities is very much confused in these Jain works.

Vākpatirāja is mentioned to be the Paramāra ruler of the same name :

धर्मभूपतिः.....परमारवंश्य नरेन्द्र महाकवि वाकपतिनामानं स्वसेवकं
सहादाय समाययी ।¹

Vākpatirāja is also mentioned as a feudatory (Vākpatirāja-sāmantaṁ).²

ĀMA, DUNDUKA AND BHOJA

An other episode mentioned in the Bappabhaṭṭi-carita relates the story of the conquest of Rājagiri-fort occupied by Samudrasena. Āma laid siege to this fort, but failed in his venture. After 12 years his grandson Bhoja, who was son of Dunduka, succeeded in conquering Rājagiri.³

END OF ĀMA-NĀGĀVALOKA

Placing his son Dunduka on the throne about six months after the capture of Rājagiri, Āma-rāja gave up his life following the path of Anaśana according to the principles of Jain-dharma in the year 890 V. S. (=833 A. D.). He was also called Nāgāvaloka (Śrīmān Nāgāvalokākhyo rājā).⁴

1. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 106. 41, p. 35, ll. 26—28.

2. Prabhāva Carita XI. 567(ii).

3. Ibid., XI. 661—675.

4. Ibid., XI. 719—721 :

विक्रमतो वर्षाणां शताष्टके सनवतौ च भाद्रपदे ।
शुके सितपञ्चम्यां चन्द्रे चित्राख्यकृक्षस्थे ॥
तुलाराणौ तथाचन्द्रस्थितेऽर्के प्रहरेऽन्तिमे ।
श्राव्यमाणो भृशं पंचपरमेष्ठिनमस्क्रियाम् ॥
दृढ जितेशसन्मित्रगुरुपादस्मृतिस्थितः ।
श्रीमान् नागावल्लोकाख्यो राजा प्राप दिवं तदा ॥

Prabandha Kośa, IX. 132. p. 43, ll. 7—10 :

सह सूरिणा नावाऽऽरूढो गंगासरित्तीरे तीर्थं मागधं गतः ।.....
संसारमसारं विदन् अनशनमग्रह्णात् । समाधिस्थः श्रीविक्रमकालात् अष्टशतवर्षेषु
नवत्यधिकेषु भाद्रपदे शुक्लपंचम्यां पंचपरमेष्ठिनः स्मरन् राजा दिवमध्यष्टात् ।

Thus came to an end the long and chequered life of Āma styled Nāgāvaloka :

Gaṅgā toyāgnimadhye tridivam upagato yatra Nāgāvalokaḥ.¹

He left behind him his people to lament the loss of a great ruler :

“सूर्यस्तत्त्वज्ञा अपि रुदुः । सेवकास्तु चक्रन्दुः—हा शरणागतरक्षावज्रकुमार !
हा राजस्थापनादाशरथे ! हा अश्वदमननल ! हा सत्यवाग् युधिष्ठिर ! हा हेम-
दानकर्ण ! हा मज्जाजैनश्रेणिक ! हा सूरिसेवासम्प्रते ! हा अनृणीकरणविक्रमादित्य !
हा वीरविद्याशातवाहन ! अस्मान् विहाय क्व गतोऽसि ? ”²

Thus Āma styled rājendra,³ is compared to such great rulers as Rāma-Dāśarathi, Nala, Yudhiṣṭhira, Karna, Śreṇika (Bimbisāra), Samprati (grandson of Aśoka), Vikramāditya, and Śātavāhana. Hence he was undoubtedly an illustrious ruler who was also known by the name of Nāgāvaloka.

EMPIRE OF ĀMA-NĀGĀVALOKA

Āma had a large empire comprising Kānyakubja-deśa which seems to have included Gopagiri⁴ (Gwalior) Kālīñjara,⁵ Mathurā,⁶ Gurjara,⁷ and Surāṣṭra⁸ which included the famous sacred spots of Raivataka-giri and Prabhāsa. Some parts of Magadha viz. Magadha-tīrtha⁹ on the Ganges where he performed the rite of

1. Prabhāvakā Carita X. 724.

2. Prabandha Kośa, IX. 132, p. 43, ll. 10—13.

3. Ibid., IX. 131. p. 42. l. 24 : आमराजेन्द्र

4. Prabandha Kośa IX. 62. 36, p. 27. ll. 16—17 :

कन्यकुब्जदेशे गोपालगिरिदुर्गनगरे ।

5. Ibid., IX. 126. 47, p. 40. l. 25 :

त्वं कालिञ्जरगिरेस्तीरे शालनामा तपस्वी....।

6. Ibid., IX. 116. 46, p. 39. ll. 14—19.

7. Ibid., IX. 132. p. 43, ll. 4—5 :

आमस्य भुक्तौ गुर्जरादिदेशास्तदा.....।

8. Ibid., IX. 131. 51, p. 42. ll. 9—29.

9. Ibid., IX. 130. p. 43. ll. 7—8

anaśana and the fort of Rājagiri¹ were also included in the empire of King Āma-Nāgāvaloka.

NĀGĀVALOKA-NĀGABHAṬA II

“The life of Bappabhaṭṭi.....contains details of an historical nature which engaged the attention of some scholars who have drawn freely from that work.² The work identifies Nāgāvaloka with king Āma of Kanauj.....”³ Dr. Puri adds that “the evidence adduced by this biography of Bappabhaṭṭi-Carita seems fairly reliable. According to the Buchkala inscription, Nāgabhaṭa II was ruling in V. S. 872 and he also possessed the title of Nāgāvaloka, as is evident from the Pathari pillar inscription of Parabala, and the Haras inscription of Cāhamāna Vighraharāja. The reference to the animosity between this ruler of Kanauj and king Dharma of Bengal is in conformity with evidence available from inscriptions. Further, both the rulers had a grandson named Bhoja.....”⁴

The account of King Āma found in the Skanda Purāṇa fully supports the identification of Āma-Nāgāvaloka with Nāgabhaṭa II.

ĀMA IN THE SKANDA PURĀṆA

Like the Jain works cited above the Skanda Purāṇa also maintains that Āma, who was ruling at Kānyakubja (Kānyakubjā-dhipo),⁵ was a powerful (balī)⁶ monarch. He was an illustrious ruler devoted to Dharma and Niti. He was a pious, polite, restrained,

1. Prabandha Kośa IX. 128. 50, p. 41. ll. 15—22.

2. G. H. Ojha E. I. Vol. XIV, p. 179, n. 3 ; R. C. Majumdar, J. D. L. Vol. X, p. 45 ; J. B. B. R. A. S. New Series Vol. III, pp. 101 fl. (quoted by Dr. Puri, H. G. P. p. 47).

3. H. G. P., p. 47.

4. Ibid., p. 48.

5. Skanda, III. ii. 36. 34.

6. Ibid., III. ii. 36. 34(i) ; III. ii. 38. 3(ii).

resolute, calm and truthful king¹ devoted to the protection of his people. He is also stated to have attained the status of a paramount ruler (sārvabhaumatvam āpannaḥ)². He had a strong army consisting of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry,³ as is also stated by the Jain writers. He had an extensive empire which extended upto Western Sea, as Dharmāraṇya was under his suzerainty. Thus Āma, the powerful and paramount sovereign who had to protect the country and its people, was undoubtedly Nāgāvaloka or Nāgabhaṭa II.

INDRASŪRI

According to the Skanda Purāṇa King Āma was converted to Jainism by a Jain philosopher named Indrasūri,⁴ who is also styled 'Jivika'.⁵ Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri Prabandha refers to Bappabhaṭṭi as Sūrindra⁶ and Sūrīśakra⁷. Indrasūri of the Skanda Purāṇa and Sūrindra or Sūrīśakra of the Bappabhaṭṭi Prabandha seem to be identical epithets of Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri.

After the death of Yaśovarman, Kanauj had no ruler worthy of name. India threatened by the Arabs needed a saviour. It was found in the person of Āma-Nāgāvaloka or Nāgabhaṭa II, who stands on a lofty pedestal in the hall of Kānyakubja as a champion of dharā and dharma.

1. Skanda P., III. ii. 36. 12—13(i) :

इदानीं च कलौ प्राप्त आमो नाम्ना बभूव ।
कान्यकुब्जाधिपः श्रीमान्धर्मज्ञो नीतितत्परः ॥
शांतो दांतः सुशीलश्च सत्यर्म परायणः ।

2. Ibid., III. ii. 36. 34—35(i) :

एतच्छ्रुत्वा गुरोरेव कान्यकुब्जाधिपो बली ।
राज्यं प्रकुरुते तत्र आमो नाम्ना हि भूतले ॥
सार्वभौमत्वमापन्नः प्रजापालनतत्परः ॥

3. Ibid., III. ii. 38. 6(i), 20(i), 21(i), 43(i)

4. Ibid., III. ii. 36. 40(i), 54(ii).

5. Ibid., III. ii. 36. 41(i).

6. Prahandha Kośa, IX. 68, p. 29. l. 26 ; IX. 94, p. 32, l. 20 ; IX. 132, p. 43, l. 8.

7. Ibid., IX. 101, p. 34 l. 19 ; IX. 125, p. 40, l. 21.

In the Rājasaṁsad of Kānyakubja he was highly eulogised for his merits as a great ruler. Vākpatirāja Observes :

पृथुरसि गुणैः कीर्त्या रामो नलो भरतो भवान्
महति समरे शत्रुघ्नस्त्वं सदैव युधिष्ठिरः ।
इति सुचरितैः ख्यातिं विभ्रन्चिरन्तनभूभृतां
कथमसि न मान्धाता देवस्त्रिलोकविजय्यपि ।²

Like the age of Harṣa and Śaśāṅka, Northern India, just before the advent of King Āma (Nāgabhaṭa II), was suffering from the evils of the Kali Age. Society was torn asunder by the sectarian rivalry. The royal court of Āma witnessed the tussle among the Brāhmaṇas and heretics viz., Buddhists, Jains and other Pāṣaṇḍas. It created confusion in the court and in the country. While dealing with the evils of the Kali Age, the Skanda Purāṇa rings the alarm-bell :

Kṣatriyā rājyahināśca mleccho rājā bhaviṣyati.³

The rulers like Nāgabhaṭa I, Nāgabhaṭa II, and Bhoja I tried to protect the country and its culture from the impending danger.

1. Prabhāvaka Carita, XI. 465.

2. Ibid., XI. 468.

3. Skanda, III. ii. 36. 31(ii).

Chapter VI

KING VIKRAMAŚILA (DHARMAPĀLA)

It is in the fitness of things that the Skanda Purāṇa which has preserved the relics of Pratihāra empire represented by Āma (Nāgabhaṭa II) and Bhoja I¹ should also uphold the glories of the Pāla empire, as Rāmacarita of Abhinanda also refers to Pratihāra-Pāla² epoch. The Vastrāpatha Kṣetra Māhātmya, seems to be recited by the sage Sārasvata to Bhoja, whose zeal for pilgrimage had been stimulated by the stories relating to his past births.

It is in this context that Skanda, while enumerating the sacred spots of Vastrāpatha Mahākṣetra, refers to Revatikunḍa, situated on the Raivata hill. Revatī (the 27th constellation) was cursed by a sage to fall on the hill-top. She was brought up there by Rājarṣi Pramuñca who sought some suitable person for her husband.³ A powerful king named Durdama son of Vikramaśila and Kāliṇḍī was found fit for her husband and he is associated with the celebrated Kṣatriya dynasty of Priyavrata. Durdama is mentioned as a mighty ruler (mahābala-parākramaḥ)⁴ styled 'rājendra'⁵ and a noble king,⁶ whose reign was marked by happiness and prosperity based on the well-being of the entire State—its capital, people, treasury, army, ministers, servants and

1. St. Sk., Part I. pp. 188-196.

2. Rāmacarita, 27. 73 ; 38. 17.

3. Skanda VII. ii. 17. 131-150.

4. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 154-155 :

शृणु मे वचनं विप्र योऽस्या भर्ता भविष्यति ।
 प्रियव्रतान्वय भवो महाबल पराक्रमः ॥
 पुत्रो विक्रमशीलस्य कालिन्दीजठरोद्भवः ।
 दुर्दमो नाम भविता भर्ता ह्यस्या महीपतिः ॥

5. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 162(i).

6. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 158(i)

allies.¹ Durdama and Revatī begot a son named Manu-Raivata, who was probably also called Mahipāla.²

Of these names of the ruling personalities — Vikramaśīla, Durdama³ and Mahipāla — Vikramaśīla is a noted figure in the history of early medieval India, as it represents the second name of Dharmapāla or Devapāla, the great Pāla rulers.⁴ Rāmacarita of the poet Abhinanda refers to a king Hāravarṣa as 'Yuvarājadevaḥ' belonging to the family of Śrī Dharmapāla :

श्रीधर्मपालकुलकैरवकाननेन्दू राजा विलासकृतिपंकजिनीविवस्वान् ।
सर्वाभिरामगुणपत्नरथत्रजैकनीडद्रुमो विजयते युवराजदेवः ॥⁵

1. Skanda, VII. ii. 17. 162—163.

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (Chap. LXXV, Jivanand Edn., Calcutta, 1879), also mentions this story in connection with the account of the fifth Manu named Raivata. But it does not refer to Mahipāla. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa refers to this story as that of the fifth Manu. The Skanda Purāṇa gives it in connection with the glorification of Revatī Kuṇḍa.

2. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 184—185 :

भविष्यति महीपालो महाबलपराक्रमः ।
रेवती रेवतीकुण्डे स्नात्वा पुत्रं जनिष्यति ॥

The entire text of the story found in the Skanda Purāṇa (VII. ii. 17. 116—185) is almost the same as we have in the Mārkaṇḍeya P. (LXXII. 1—68) with a few variant readings. Skanda adds a few verses (VII. ii. 17. 138—134, 136(i), 139) dealing with the glory of Revatī-Kuṇḍa, placed on the Raivataka hill in the province of Surāṣṭra.

Similarly the above noted verse is not found in the Mārkaṇḍeya version of the story. It seems to be added deliberately by the Purāṇakāra. Probably Mahipāla, a king, seems to be name of the son of Durdama.

3. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa reads Durgama in place of Durdama.

4. D. M., pp. 383, 384 and note 1.

5. Rāmacarita (at the end of Sarga XXVIII), p. 253.

Yuvarājadeva was ruling over the country during the time of Abhinanda (kulendau pālānām avati yuvarāja vasumatīm).¹ He was a conqueror and a Dharma-vijayī² styled Janēśvara worthy of respect.³ Thus rightly Yuvarājadeva-Hāravarṣa does not represent a heir, but a ruler of great celebrity marked by his glorious achievements (vikramāvadānān).⁴ Yuvarāja has been identified with Devapāla and Hāravarṣa may have been an other epithet of Devapāla.⁵

Rāmacarita refers to Yuvarāja Hāravarṣa as 'Vikramaśīla-nandanah'⁶ and Vikramaśīla-janmā, who is also styled prthvipatīḥ (prthvipatir jayati Virkramaśīla-janmā).⁷

"So Hāravarṣa was a son of Vikramaśīla. The colophon of the Śragadharā-stotraṭīkā mentions Jinarakṣita of Vikramaśīla-deva-mahāvihāra. It appears that the founder of the Vikramaśīla-monastery was also known as Vikramaśīladeva. Dharmapāla is credited with the foundation of this monastery. Therefore Hāravarṣa.....son of Vikramaśīla was a son of Dharmapāla and should be identified with Devapāla".⁸ Hāravarṣa, an other name of Devapāla, is stated to be based on the liberality and generosity of Devapāla.⁹

"It may also be pointed out that in one verse in the Rāmacarita, Hāravarṣa is mentioned as 'prthvipāla'. If the latter is a proper name, then Hāravarṣa is certainly, a different person from Devapāla".¹⁰ But prthvipāla seems to be a mere royal epithet like prthvipati given to him.¹¹

1. R. C., p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 113.

3. Ibid., p. 63 :

पालान्वयाम्बुजवनैक विरोचनाय तस्मै नमोऽस्तु युवराजजनेश्वराय ।

4. Ibid., VI. 4.

5. Ibid., Introduction, pp. XVI—XXII.

6. R. C., pp. 39.63.

7. Ibid., p. 262, at the end of Sarga XXX.

8. D. M., p. 383.

9. Ibid., pp. 383—384.

10. Ibid., p. 384.

11. R. C., p. 262, at the end of Sarga XXX.

Thus Vikramaśīla, father of Durdama, may be identified with Dharmapāla of the Pāla dynasty. Durdama, like Hāravr̥ṣa, represents the other epithet of Devapāla, based on his 'mahābala-parākrama', which is also described by Abhinanda in his Rāmacarita. Our identification of Durdama with Devapāla is further supported by the fact that Mahīpāla is stated to be a son of Durdama as well as that of Devapāla. Thus Vikramaśīla, Durdama and Mahīpāla mentioned in the Skanda Purāṇa appear to be rulers of the Pāla dynasty named Dharmapāla, Devapāla and Mahīpāla respectively.

In view of the wide range of conquests² achieved by Devapāla in the different directions, it is not surprising if the celebrated Pāla ruler reached the Raivata hill in the course of hunting excursion.³ Thus the Skanda Purāṇa throws interesting light on the history of the Pālas.

DHARMAPĀLA AND THE YAVANAS

Dvārakā Māhātmya section of the Skanda Purāṇa (VII. iv), which describes the importance of Viṣṇu-bhakti,⁴ also glorifies notable cultural belts of Bhārata viz., Brahmāvarṭta, Madhyadeśa, and Āryadeśa. It denounces Mlecchadeśa which was to be deserted.⁵ It exhibits Āryāvarta-consciousness,⁶ that spurred the Pālas and the Pratihāras to set up prasara-dharaṇi-bandha against the attacks of Mleccha hordes.

The Arab principality of Sind was named Yavana-deśa⁷ and the Garuḍa Purāṇa specifically refers to the Mlecchas and

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1. D. M., p. 384, Foot-note 3 : "According to Bu-son (p. 157) one Mahīpāla was a son of Devapāla".
 2. Ibid., pp. 369—375.
 3. Sk., VII. ii. 17. 156.
 4. Ibid., VII. iv. 38. 17.
 5. Ibid., VII. iv. 39. 92—93.
 6. A. I. K., Foreword by Munshi pp. XVI—XVII, Gl. G. D., Part I, p. 61.
 7. Skanda I. ii. 39. 161(ii).
St. Sk., pt. I. p. 51.

Yavanas of Sind (saindhavā nāstikā mleccchāḥ Yavanās tathā).¹

Ānartta (North Gujarat with Dvārakā as its capital) was turned into Daitya-bhūmi² dominated by the Mlecchas, who terrorised Brāhmaṇas. The Vedas, Śāstras, tīrthas and gods (shrines) were threatened by them. Dharmapāla (Defender of Faith), as the very name suggests, seems to have championed the cause of Dharma.

The Skanda Purāṇa continues that in the country of Ānartta styled Daityabhūmi, the famous sage named Durvāsā happened to come to take bath at Cakra-tīrtha marked by the confluence of the Gomatī and the sea. Durvāsā was noticed by Daityas and Mlecchas who wanted to kill him, as no body, not even a Brāhmaṇa, was allowed to take bath there.³ His clothes were thrown away and similarly the kuśa-grass (an essential requisite for the performance of ablutions) was scattered there in the water. Demon Ruru caught hold of the sage and he was driven out of that country.⁴ Such was the reign of terror.

Durvāsā thought that Cakradhara-Viṣṇu alone was the saviour. While meditating upon Him, the sage found the Lord standing in front of him. He consoled the sage with his observations :

1. Garuḍa p., I. 55. 15.

2. Skanda, VII. iv. 18. 18—19 :

आनर्त्तविषयं प्राप्य दैत्यभूमिं विवेश ह ॥

निःस्वाध्यायवषट्कारां वेदध्वनिविवर्जिताम् ॥

कुशेन दैत्यराजेन सेवितां पालितां तथा ॥

बहुम्लेच्छसमाकीर्णमिधर्मोपार्जकैर्जनैः ॥

There is epigraphic evidence to show that this part of the country had to face furious fire at the hands of Tājikas (अशेषलोकसंतापकलापदः ताजिकानलः) as we know from the Navasari Plates of Avanijanāśraya. The Tājikas (Arabs) had conquered Saindhava, Kacchella, Saurāṣṭra, Cāvoṭaka, Maurya, Gurjara and other kings, cf. C. I. I., Vol. IV. pp. LXIV, 105, 109.

3. Skanda, VII. iv. 18. 25(i).

4. Ibid, VII. iv. 18. 15-28.

केनापमानितो ब्रह्मन्त्रियमः केन खण्डितः ।
कथयस्व महाभाग धर्मपाले मयि स्थिते ॥ ¹

Viṣṇu, devoted to the protection of Brāhmaṇas (Brahmaṇya)² is styled Dharmapāla.

This mythological story describes the persecution of Brāhmaṇas at the hands of Daityas, Dānavas, Asuras and Mlecchas in the region around Dvārakā. It also tells us that the God Viṣṇu came to their rescue.³

The mention of Dharmapāla as the saviour of Brāhmaṇas is significant ; for we know that "by a Gujarati poet in the eleventh century A. D. Dharmapāla is referred to as the Lord of Northern India (Uttarāpatha-svāmī).⁴ From the Khalimpur Copper-Plate inscription of Dharmapāla we learn that the great Pāla conqueror was recognised as the emperor by the kings of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhāra and Kīra.⁵ Yadus or Yādavas had their settlement at Dvārakā in Ānartta. Bhojas were also the members of Vṛṣṇyandhaka Saṁgha of Kathiawar. "The Yavanas must be taken to refer to a Muslim principality in the Sindhu Valley."⁶ The Daityas, Asuras and Mlecchas of the Skanda Purāṇa were the Yavanas or the Arabs.

According to the Udaya Sundarī Kathā⁷ the king Dharmapāla belonged to the family of Māndhātā and he was the Lord of Uttarāpatha, who justified his name by giving protection to Dharma :

1. Skanda, VII. iv. 18. 45.

2. Ibid., VII. iv. 18. 38(i).

3. Ibid., VII. iv, Chapter 18.

4. A. I. K., p. 46, vide Udayasundarī Kathā of Sodḍhala (G. O. S. Edn.) pp. 4-6,

A. I. K., p. 56, notes 12—13.

5. Khalimpur Copper Plate Ins. of Dharmapāla, l. 21

A. I. K., p. 46 ; D. M. p. 341.

6. A. I. K., p. 46,

7. U. S. K., p. 4 :

उत्तरापथस्वामिना मान्धातृवंशप्रभवेण भूभृता धर्मपालेन ।

धर्मपालोऽपि देव ! स एष धर्मपालः.....¹

Thus the personality of Dharmapāla sketched in the story of Dvārakā Māhātmya of the Skanda Purāṇa as the saviour of Brāhmaṇas and Dharma is mirrored in the work of a Gujarati poet, Soḍḍhala. The personality and the heroic character of Dharmapāla was worthy of note sung by the sages (Śrī Dharmapālaḥ sujana stūyamānāvadānaḥ) who held him as the sole supreme lord of kings and ruler of the whole earth (svāmī bhūmipatīnām akhila vasumatī maṇḍalam śāśadekaḥ).² He is stated to have relieved the earth of heavy burden with the help of Cakra.³ In him alone were to be seen the combined virtues of ancient kings viz., Pṛthu, Rāma-Rāghava and Nala. Such was the great ruler styled Dharmapāla in the Kali age.⁴

Thus it is evident that the Kali age characterised by the dominance of adharma found a worthy ruler who gave protection to Dharma and dharā thereby justifying his name, Dharmapāla. The reference to Cakra as a companion of Dharmapāla (cakrasāhāyakārtham) leaves no doubt about the divine personality of Dharmapāla like that of Viṣṇu known as Cakradhara. Attention is drawn here towards Cakrahasta-Viṣṇu, regarded as the only saviour, mentioned in the Skanda Purāṇa⁵ as well as Dharmapāla with Cakrasāhāyakam mentioned in his Khalimpur Copper Plate inscription.

The Junagarh inscription of Skandagupta eulogises Cakrabhṛt, who carries cakra for the destruction of enemies.⁶ The Asirgarh Seal of Sarvavarman portrays Dharma (Bull decorated with a garland) protected by Cakradhara.⁷

1. U.S.K., p. 7.

2. Khalimpur Plate Ins. l. 10.

3. Ibid., l. 13.

4. Ibid., ll. 17—18, V. 10.

5. Skanda, VII. iv. 18. 33 :

ब्रह्मादीनां च नेतां शरणागतवत्सलम्
चक्रहस्तं बिना मेघ कोन्यः शरणदो भवेत् ॥

6. Junagarh Rock Ins. of Skandagupta, ll. 26-27.

7. C. I. I., Vol. III, pp. 219-221, and Plate XXX.

CHAPTER VI

BHOJA-THE GREAT

यावन्नभः सुरसस्त्रिसरोत्तरीयं, यावत्सुदुश्चरतपः प्रभवः प्रभावः ।
सत्यञ्च यावदुपरिस्थमवत्यशेषं तावत्पुनातु जगतीमियमार्यकीर्त्तिः ॥¹

Bhoja, son of the Dharma-rakṣaka (trātā dharmasya) aptly styled Rāma² (Rāmabhadra), was himself the exalted defender of Āryāvarta at a time when the monstrous Kali — the internal strife (political and religious) as well as the external danger caused by the invasions of Mlecchas³—threatened the very foundations of Vedic culture. Bhoja is styled the conqueror of Kali and the lord of the Fame (adharita kaleḥ kīrtter bharttuḥ).⁴ Hence the age of Bhoja is aptly described as the Puṇya-yuga (Sat yuga) when the renowned (viśrutaḥ) and pious (dharmyaḥ) king Bhoja was ruling over the sacred country of Kānyakubja in conformity with the dictates of Prajā-dharma :

कान्यकुब्जे महाक्षेत्रे राजा भोजेति विश्रुतः ।

पुरा पुण्ययुगे धर्म्यः प्रजाधर्मेण शासति ॥⁵

It has been well-said, and said by the Hindu political thinkers that a king is the maker of his age (rājā kālasya kārṇam).⁶ The Mahābhārata tells us that by adhering entirely to the principles of Daṇḍanīti, in letter and spirit, a king brings to his people a golden age of peace and piety.⁷ It is true that Bhoja I of the Pratihāra dynasty turned his age into Kṛtayuga by adherence to the Rājadharmā which is the same as the Prajādharmā. Thus

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1. Gwalior Praśasti of Bhoja, v. 26.
 2. Ibid., l. 9.
 3. Kali also denotes Mleccha.
 4. Gwalior Praśasti, v. 20 and its English translation.
 5. Skanda, VII. ii. 6, 20.
 6. Mbh., Śānti Parva LXIX. 79.
 7. Ibid., LXIX. 80 :

दण्डनीत्यां यदा राजा सम्यक् कार्त्स्न्येन वर्तते ।
तदा कृतयुगं नाम कालसृष्टं प्रवर्तते ॥

dharmyaḥ rājā Bhoja i. e. king Bhoja consistent with his duty of giving protection to country, its people and culture ruled in accordance with the royal duties towards its people. Prajādharmā also reflects upon the paternal principle of administration. It is supported by the Gwalior Praśasti of Bhoja as well as by Rājaśekhara who upholds the concept of Prajāpati based on the good of the people (prajāsu hitakāmyayā prajāpatiḥ).¹

BHOJA-THE PRAJĀPATI

Rāmabhadra had no son, who could shoulder the responsibility of his country and its government. Hence he performed religious rites. He propitiated the Sun to have a son who could perform the functions of the Prajāpati (prajāpatitvaṁ viniyoktu kāmāḥ).²

MIHIRA

The son, so born to him, by the blessings of the Sūrya was named Mihira :

जगद्वितृष्णुः स विशुद्धसत्त्वः प्रजापतित्वं विनियोक्तुकामः ।

सुतं रहस्यव्रतमुपसन्नात् सूर्यादवापन्मिहिराभिधान ॥ ³

“A pure soul, averse from the world, he obtained a son named Mihira, by (the favour of) the Sun, propitiated by mysterious rites, in order to dispose of the lordship over his subjects.”⁴

Now the question arises as to why the newly born babe was named Mihira ? There are other names of the Sun, one of which could have been conferred upon him. There is a specific reason for which he was named Mihira. From the Skanda Purāṇa we know that there was a celebrated solar shrine at Kānyakubja dedicated to Mihira (Mihiraṁ Kānyakubje)⁵. It was, here, in this temple of Mihira at Kānyakubja that Rāmabhadra performed religious rites to propitiate the god Mihira, who was pleased to bestow upon his devotee the favour of having a son⁶ and the son so

1. K. M., p. 1/5.

2. Gwalior Stone Inscription of Bhoja, v. 15(b).

3. Ibid., v. 15.

4. Ibid., English translation.

5. Skanda P., VII. i. 139. 22(ii).

6. cf. Varāha P. CLVII. 39—44. Here we are told that Vāsudeva-Devakiputra and Śāntanu obtained sons by worshipping the Sun.

born was consequently named Mihira.

BHOJA

Mihira was also called Bhoja as we know from the Gwalior Praśasti which tells us :

उपरोधैकसंरुद्धविन्ध्यवृद्धेरगस्त्यतः
आक्रम्य भूभृतां भोक्ता यः प्रभुर्भोज इत्यभात् ।¹

“The lord (prabhuḥ) who ruled over many kings (bhūbhṛt) after having overcome them and (being therefore) known as Bhoja, shone more gloriously than Agastya who merely checked the rise of (a single bhūbhṛt i. e. mountain) Vindhya through favour (and not by his prowess)”.²

But the epigraphic passage — sa prabhuḥ ākramya bhūbhṛt-ānām bhoktā — reflects upon the overlordship (prabhutvaṁ) of Bhoja over the kings beyond the Vindhya range. Bhoja crossed the Vindhya Hill and after attacking kings (ākramya) forced them to pay taxes (bhoga), thereby making them his tributaries (karadīkṛta).

Hence this ‘bhoktā’ (king), who assumed his lordship over the kings beyond the Vindhyan range, was styled Bhoja.³ Thus Mihira was called Bhoja and he is generally known as Mihira Bhoja.

PRABHĀSA

According to Dr. Tripathi “In the Daulatapur inscription, however, he is given the title of Prabhāsa, which means splendour, and perhaps refers to the name Mihira (the sun)”.⁴ But the two

1. Gwalior Stone Ins. of Bhoja, v. 16.
2. Ibid., its English translation, v. 16.
3. The epigraph here refers to an analogy between Agastya and Bhoja. Agastya had asked the Vindhya mountain to bow down in order to give him way to the South. Thus Agastya had gone to South India by requesting the bhūbhṛta (mountain) beyond it; while Bhoja had besieged the bhūbhṛtas (kings) ruling over the Vindhyan region) to bow low and pay taxes to Bhoja.
4. T. H. K., pp. 237—238.

names Prabhāsa and Mihira are not identical as Tripathi thinks, though both the terms (Mihira and Prabhāsa) represent the Sun. Their sphere of influence was different. While Mihira represented the overlordship of Kānyakubja-mahākṣetra, the Prabhāsa seems to represent his lordship of Saurāṣṭra which was an important country of Bhārata, and Prabhāsa was the most sacred region there.¹

The epithet Prabhāsa, assumed by Mihira Bhoja represents the divine splendour of Śiva which had permeated the whole region.² The gods also regained their splendour here in this region. It was here that the unique splendour of the Sun made itself felt by the people for the first time. It was also here that Soma cursed by Dakṣa regained his prabhā. Here was to be heard the reverberating sound of Brāhmī Bhārati uttered by Brāhmaṇas. Washed by the ocean this sacred region was always served by Bhāskara. Thus these various etymological meanings of Prabhāsa³ are attributed to Mahārāja Śrī Bhojadeva styled

1. Skanda, VII. i. 11. 37—44.

2. Ibid., VII. i. 11. 44.

3. Ibid., VII. i. 11. 39—54 :

प्रभास इति विख्यातो मम देवि प्रियः सदा । ३९
एतत्प्राभासिकं क्षेत्रं प्रभया दीपितं मम । ४४
तेन प्रभासमित्युक्तं आदिकल्पे वरानने ।
द्वितीये तु प्रभा लब्धा सर्वदेवैः सवासवैः ॥ ४५
मम प्रभाभा देवेशि तेन प्राभासिकं स्मृतम् ।
प्रभाववन्तो देवेशि तत्र संति महामुराः ॥ ४६
अथवा तेन लोकेषु प्रभासमिति कीर्त्यते ।
प्रथम भासतेदेवि सर्वेषां भुवि तेजसाम् ॥ ७७
प्रकृष्टं भानुरथवा भासितो विश्वकर्मणा ।
यत्र साक्षात्प्रभापातो जातः प्राभासिकं ततः ॥ ४८
अथवा दक्षसंतप्तेनेन्दुना निष्प्रभेण च ।
तत्र देवि प्रभा लब्ध तेन प्राभासिकं स्मृतम् ॥ ४९
प्रकृष्टा भारती ब्राह्मी विप्रोक्ता श्रूयतेऽवनि ।
सदा यत्र महादेवि प्रभासं तेन कीर्तितं ॥ ५०
प्रोल्लसद्बीचिभिर्भाति सर्वदा सागरः प्रिये ।
तेन प्रभास नामेति त्रिषुलोकेषु विश्रुतम् ॥ ५१
प्रत्यक्षं भास्करो यत्र सदा तिष्ठति भामिनि ।
तेन प्रभास नामेति प्रसिद्धिमगमत्क्षितौ ॥ ५२
प्रकृष्टं भाविनां सर्वं कामं तत्र ददाम्यहम् ।
तेन प्रभास नामेति तीर्थं त्रैलोक्यविश्रुतम् ॥ ५३

Prabhāsa¹ which exhibits like the Sun, (sauram tejah) his unassailable power².

The Yavanas, Daityas and Asuras who had caused a reign of terror here in this region (cf. the Chapter VI. Dharmapāla and the Yavanas) were suppressed by this great ruler who is mentioned as 'the greatest foe to the Mohammedan faith'.

It should be pointed out here that Prabhāsa was an ancient sacred spot of great sanctity where Kṛṣṇa (Vāsudeva) gave up his life after deserting Dvārakā. It was the age of Bhoja styled Prabhāsa that during this period Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa was composed and added to this oceanic text. In the very beginning, this section tells us that the Lord who assumed the form of Varāha gave up his life at Prabhāsa :

स कथं पञ्चतां प्राप प्रभासे पार्वतीपते ।
यः पुराणे पुराणात्मा वाराहं वपुरास्थितः ॥
उद्धार महीं कृत्स्नां सशैलवनकाननाम् ॥
स कथं त्यक्तवान्गात्रं प्रभासे पापनाशने ॥³

It is possible that like his grand-father, Nāgabhaṭa II, Bhoja or Prabhāsa gave up his life at Prabhāsa.

ĀDIVARĀHA

"An other title assumed by him in the Gwalior Caturbhuj epigraph and in certain coins of base silver was that of Ādivarāha, showing that he posed to identify himself with the Boar-incarnation of Viṣṇu."⁴ Munshi observes : "Āryāvarta was a pyramid of culture. At its apex stood Viṣṇu himself, the upholder of a well-ordered realm, the protector of happy and well-ordered governace.

1. Skanda, VII. i. 13. 21 :

यस्मादर्कस्य तेजोभिर्भासितं मम तद्गृहम् ।

तस्मात्प्रभासनामेति कल्पेऽस्मिन्प्रथितं प्रिये ।

2. Agni p., 226. 17(i) :

तेजसा दुर्निरीक्ष्यो हि राजा भास्करवत् ततः ॥

3. Skanda, VII. i. 9. 28—28.

4. T. H. K., p. 238.

That is why Bhoja acquired the epithet of Ādi Varāha."¹ The silver coins of Mihira Bhoja of the Ādi Varāha type have on the obverse the figure of the God Ādi Varāha with the legend 'Śrī-madādivarāha' on the reverse. The solar disc shown in front of the Varāha-mūrti represents Mihira (the Sun).²

The figure of Varāha with all its limbs represents the different items, aspects and equipments of sacrifice. Hence Varāha is styled Yajñāṅga.

It shows the revival of Trayī Dharma by Ādi Varāha who also rescued the country (earth) from being submerged in Turuṣka-samudra by destroying the enemies. The Varāha Purāṇa offers its salutations to such saviour³ who is urged to destroy the enemies (nudatu mama ripūn ādidevo Varāhaḥ)⁴. Thus it is evident that the various epithets and names borne by Bhoja viz., Mihira, Bhoja, Prabhāsa and Ādi Varāha throw a flood of light on the personality and achievements of Mihira-Bhoja.

HISTORY OF BHOJA (Bhojavṛttānta)

Munshi, the Gurjara-historian, observed, that, "Vandalism has destroyed the monuments of Bhoja's greatness. Until a few years ago he was quite unknown to Indian history. Further research is certain to establish what has already been foreshadowed by the evidence available at present."⁵

The greatness of Bhoja is also preserved in the 'Bhoja-vṛttānta' (Story of Bhoja) of the Skanda Purāṇa. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri drew the attention of the scholars to a 'legend' mentioned in the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa, which describes the following story :—

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1. Gl. G. D., Part I, pp. 122—123.
 2. Ibid., Appendix VI, pp. 215—216.
H. G. P., Appendix C. pp. 152—153.
 3. C. M. I., p. 49 ; Smith, C. C. I. M., Vol. I. p. 241.
 3. Varaha, 1. 1.
 4. Ibid., 1. 2.
 5. Gl. G. D., Part I, p. 137.

"In the days of yore there lived in Kānyakubja (Kanauj) a king named Bhoja. Once upon a time there came to him a Vanapāla (Warden of the Forest) who said, "Sire (deva) I have seen a woman with the face of a doe roaming with a herd of deer in the forests at Raivataka." The king's curiosity was roused. Collecting his troops he marched towards Raivataka and encircled the hill with a net. The deer-maiden was captured by the Balādhyakṣa (general), and was taken by the king to Kānyakubja, where she recounted the story of her previous births, and spoke about the spiritual efficacy of the holy waters of the Suvarṇarekhā. The king was much impressed with what he heard about Surāṣṭra and its holy spots from the maiden and a Brāhmaṇa from Kurukṣetra, and expressed his resolve to abdicate in favour of his son, so that he might be free to undertake a pilgrimage to those sacred spots."¹ Dr. Raychaudhuri observes that, "There are details in this, as in other priestly legends, which belong to the domain of fairy tales, and are absolutely unworthy of serious consideration. But there are three points which deserve examination. These are (1) the mention of a king Bhoja who reigned at Kanauj, (2) the connection of that king with Surāṣṭra as evidenced by the appointment of a Vanapāla and despatch of an army, and (3) his abdication in favour of his son."²

He further adds that "Regarding point (3), viz., that relating to the alleged abdication of Bhoja.....The possibility that Bhoja actually abdicated temporarily about A. D. 893 cannot be entirely excluded in view of the king's resolve alluded to in the Skanda Purāṇa".³ Relating the story in the words of Raychaudhuri, Dr. R. S. Tripathi observes that, "Much of the story is no doubt absolutely unworthy of credence, but the connection of Bhoja of Kanauj with Saurāṣṭra as evidenced by the appointment of a Vanapāla and sending of an army appears to be the substratum of truth. Dr. Raychaudhuri even accepts the story of Bhoja's abdication, and finds confirmation for it in the Ahar stone inscrip-

1. St. Ind. Ant., p. 151.

2. Ibid., pp. 151-152.

3. St. Ind. Ant., pp. 153-154.

cf., I. H. 2, Vol. V, (1929), pp. 129-133.

tion,.....But I venture to differ from the views of the learned Professor on this point.....”¹ Though the learned historian differs from the views of Dr. Raychandhuri, yet he did not care to examine the story in original.

BHOJA AND VASTRĀPATHA MĀHĀTMYA

While discussing the conquests of Bhoja, Dr. B. N. Puri observes : “Sometime back Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri (I. H. Q., Vol. V., pp. 129-135) referred to a passage from the Vastrāpatha-māhātmya, a section of the Prabhāsa-Khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa dealing with the sacred sites of Girnar, tending to show that Bhoja’s authority extended upto Saurāṣṭra or Kathiawar. It is needless to go into the story centring round a woman with the face of a doe accompanying a herd of deer in the forests at Raivataka, her capture by Balādhyakṣa, and her revelations at Kānyakubja referring to the waters of the Suvarṇarekhā. The story is incredible, but it adduces the following points which deserve consideration. Firstly it refers to Bhoja’s connection with Saurāṣṭra where he appointed a Vanapāla, and despatched his army (VI. 25 f). Secondly, Bhoja is mentioned as the emperor of Kanauj.....Lastly, this king is supposed to have abdicated, though temporarily, in favour of his son.”²

“Thus the data presented by the Vastrāpatha-māhātmya, seem to be in conformity with facts known from other sources, and its evidentiary value as a corroborative piece of evidence be accepted with reference to the facts stated above”.³ While discussing the abdication of Bhoja, Dr. Puri hesitates in “accepting the data from a late work”.⁴ Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri realised the historical importance of the legend as an important source of

1. T. H. K., pp. 245-246.

2. H. G. P., pp. 58-59

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (Chap. 71, S. V. Press Edn.) also contains a similar story of king Svarāṣṭra and a mṛgī.

3. H. G. P., pp. 58-59.

4. Ibid., p. 65.

post-Gupta history.¹ But the proper assessment of the story as a source of Bhoja's reign has not been done. It throws important light on the following points :—

- (i) Personality of Bhoja — his physical and intellectual attainments as well as his piety and prowess
- (ii) Extent of Kānyakubja empire (Kānyakubja-mahādeśa)
- (iii) Principles of administration (Prajā-dharma)
- (iv) Army
- (v) Public-services
- (vi) Abdication of Bhoja

Thus we see that 'Bhoja-vṛttānta-varṇanam' — account of events and incidents associated with the life of Bhoja-rājā found in the Vastrāpatha-Māhātmya is an important source of the history of early medieval India. The subsequent chapters represent a discourse between Rājā Bhoja and his preceptor Sārasvata, which comes to close in the chapter 19, the last chapter of this sub-section.² Many stories and narratives are mentioned in the course of his speech. One such narrative centres round the person of Nārada, who was distressed to find an era of peace devoid of 'Kali' or 'Kālaha' i. e. strife, when only one 'protector of the earth' was ruling over the country. There was no fight between the gods and the demons, there was no rivalry (caused by the different wives) ; there was no fight between the lion and the elephants (i. e. between Kṣatriyas and Mlecchas, cf. A. B. L. Awasthi, Indian Nationalism, Vol. I, Appendix III, Gaja-Śārdūla, pp. 240-246). There was an era of friendship.³ We know that the reign of Bhoja was marked by the struggle between the different Kṣatriya dynasties as well as between Kṣatriyas and the Mlecchas. Bhoja himself had to fight against the Asuras (Arabs), who were taught a good lesson by means of his arms.⁴ The account only shows the might of Bhoja who established peace and security

1. St. Ind. Ant., p. 150.

2. It is called :

“वस्त्रापथक्षेत्रयात्रामाहात्म्यसारस्वतभोजसंवादसमाप्तिपुरःसर
वस्त्रापथक्षेत्रमाहात्म्यसमाप्तिवर्णनं नामैकोनविंशतितमोऽध्यायः”

3. Sk., VII. ii. 14. 16-18.

4. Gawlior Stone Inscription of Bhoja, v 22.

in the Madhyadeśa. "He had inherited a crippled kingdom in an adverse situation, but his strong hand steered him clear of difficult situation in a record rule of over a half a century. At his death he left a consolidated and organised empire for his son and successor Mahendrapāla. The Arab storm had lulled and the tide had turned....."¹ Thus Bhoja brought stability to the political system of the Āryāvarta by imbuing a new spirit of vigorous policy against the enemies, and that of tolerance and liberality to his people and allies.

BHOJA THE GREAT (SA BHOJA NR̥PASATTAMAḤ)

The personality of the exalted king named Bhoja is marked by the indelible impressions left on the track of history of the country. The Vastrāpatha Kṣetra Māhātmya contains some important events of his life. This account is called Bhoja-Vṛttānta the study of which throws important light on the history of Bhoja, his life and times. He was the greatest ruler of Kāñyākubja which attained the status of a mahādeśa (a great prosperous country) and a mahākṣetra (the land of great sanctity). The accounts of his past life narrated by his queen also throw important light on social and political life of that age. His campaign to Surāṣṭra gives an idea of his army and victorious campaigns he led to the different parts of the country specially beyond the Vindhya-hills — a fact which gave him the title of Bhoja.

The Bhoja-vṛttānta also contains a brief account of thirtysix virtues of kingship which led to stability of the state. It is a short political treatise recommended for the rulers of Hindu medieval India which was threatened by Turuṣkas. India in the times of Bhoja was still strong and stable maintaining its political and cultural contacts with the Dvīpāntara, which is mentioned by Rājaśekhara as an inseparable limb of Bhāratavarṣa.

PERSONALITY OF BHOJA

The personality of a ruler — his form and features as well as merits and demerits — have a great bearing on his people and his government. Bhoja's might and majesty were based on the grace

1. H. G. P., p. 66.

and charm of his person blessed with large eyes, and long arms. He was wise and learned as well as eloquent and affable in address. He possessed all the features (of royalty) with special liking for seeing curious things and wonders¹.

To my mind, the account of the previous births of Bhoja and his newly wedded wife (deer-maiden) traces the development of the personality of Bhoja, an whose person was based the entire structure of the state (ātmani.....yatra sarvaṃ pratiṣṭhitam).²

We learn from the account of his previous births that the neglect of the Vedic and canonic studies was deemed to be a disqualification for a king ; cruelty, greed, pride, and anger are also mentioned to be vices ; lack of compassion as well as respect for the gods, preceptor and Brāhmaṇas were the principal vices, which antagonised the people. The peoples' opposition led to a king's fall. Running away from the battlefield opposed to kṣātra dharma was deemed to be a great sin.⁴ Skanda asserts that the aggressive policy based on the well-equipped army against an enemy leads to the conquest of a Kṣatriya.⁵

Similarly this very section contains a discourse between Bali and Nārada. The former asked the latter to tell him the virtues which led to a king's success in the administration of his state. Nārada told Bali that a king gifted with 36 virtues succeeds in his administration.⁶ This discourse has been taken from the Mahābhārata.⁷

ṢAṬ-TRIMŚATGUṆAS

Kings must possess these thirty-six virtues for the stability of

1. Skanda VII. ii. 6. 21 :

विशालाक्षो दीर्घबाहुर्विद्वान्वाग्मीप्रियंवदः ।

सर्वलक्षणसंपूर्णो बह्वाश्चर्यं विलोककः ॥

2. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 162 :

प्रस्तुतं प्राह राजेन्द्रं नृपते कुशलं पुरे ।

तथात्मनि महाबाहो यत्र सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

3. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 82-85.

4. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 86.

5. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 81.

6. Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 84.

7. St. Sk. Part I, pp. 242-244.

their State, as was told by Bhīṣma to Yudhiṣṭhira,¹ who asked the former as to how happiness here and hereafter may be achieved :—

युधिष्ठिर उवाच—केन वृत्तेन वृत्तज्ञ वर्तमानो महीपतिः ।

सुखेनार्थान् सुखेनोक्तानिह प्रेत्य चाप्नुयात् ॥

भीष्म उवाच—अयं गुणानां षट्त्रिंशत्षट्त्रिंशद्गुणसंयुतः ।

यान् गुणांस्तु गुणोपेतः कुर्वन् गुणमवाप्नुयात् ॥²

चरेद्धर्मानकटुको मुञ्चेत् स्नेहं न चास्तिकः ।

अनृशंसश्चरेदर्थं चरेत् काममनुद्धतः ॥

Śānti P., LXX. 3

प्रियं ब्रूयादकृपणः शूरः स्यादविकृत्यनः ।

दाता नापन्नवर्षी स्यात् प्रगल्भः स्यादनिष्टुरः ॥ Ibid., LXX. 4.

संदधीत् न चानार्यैर्विगृह्णीयान्न बन्धुभिः ।

नाभक्तं चारयेच्चारं कुर्यात् कार्यमपीडया ॥ Ibid., LXX. 5.

अर्थं ब्रूयान्न चासत्सु गुणान् ब्रूयान्न चात्मनः ।

आदद्यान्न च साधुभ्यो नासत्पुरुषमाश्रयेत् ॥ Ibid., LXX. 6.

नापरीक्ष्य नयेद् दण्डं न च मन्त्रं प्रकाशयेत् ।

विसृजेन्न च लुब्धेभ्यो विश्वसेन्नापकारिषु ॥ Ibid., LXX. 7.

अनीर्षुर्गुप्तदारः स्याच्चोक्षः स्यादघृणी नृपः ।

स्त्रियः सेवेत् नात्यर्थं मृष्टं भुञ्जीत् नाहितम् ॥ Ibid., LXX. 8.

अस्तब्धः पूजयेन्मान्यान् गुरून् सेवेदमायया ।

अर्चेद् देवानदम्भेन श्रियमिच्छेदकुत्सिताम् ॥ Ibid., LXX. 9.

सेवेत् प्रणयं हित्वा दक्षः स्यान्न त्वकालवित् ।

सान्त्वयेन्न च मोक्षाय अनुगृह्णन्न चाक्षिपेत् ॥ Ibid., LXX. 10.

प्रहरेन्न त्वविज्ञाय हत्वा शत्रून् न शोचयेत् ।

क्रोधं कुर्यान्न चाकस्मान्मृदुः स्यान्नापकारिषु ॥ Ibid., LXX. 11.

एवं चरस्व राज्यस्थो यदि श्रेय इहेच्छसि ।

अतोऽन्यथा नरपतिर्भयमृच्छत्यनुत्तमम् ॥ Ibid., LXX. 12.

इति सर्वान् गुणानेतान् यथोक्तान् योऽनुवर्तते ।

अनुभूयेह भद्राणि प्रेत्य स्वर्गं महीयते ॥ Ibid., LXX. 13.

1. Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Ch. 70 (Gita Press Edn.).

2. Ibid., LXX. 1-2.

We give the translation of the entire passage (Chap. LXX, Śāntiparva, translated by Shri M. N. Dutt Shastri, Calcutta 1903, p. 106). Yudhiṣṭhira asked :—

“By following what conduct, ‘O’ you who are a master of every kind of behaviour, can a king succeed in easily acquiring, both in this world and in the next, objects which yield happiness in the end ?”

Bhīṣma replied :—

2. “There are thirty-six virtues which a king should practiseA virtuous person following these virtues, can certainly acquire great merit”.

3. “The king should follow his duties without his malice. He should not cast off mercy. He should have faith. He should earn wealth without persecution and cruelty. He should seek pleasure without attachment”.

4. “He should cheerfully speak out what is pleasant, and be brave without brag. He should be liberal, but should not make gifts to unworthy persons. He should exercise power without cruelty”.

5. “He should make alliances, but not with the wicked. He should not act inimically towards his friends. He should never employ persons who are not devoted to him as his spies and secret emissaries. He should never accomplish his works by oppression”.

6. “He should never give out his purposes before the wicked. He should speak of the merits of others, but never his own. He should take money from his subjects but never from those who are good. He should never take the assistance of wicked persons”.

7. “He should never inflict punishment without making carefull enquiry. He should never give out his counsels. He should never give out his counsels. He should distribute money, but not amongst covetous persons. He should place confidence in others, but never in those who have injured him”.

8. “He should not entertain malice. He should protect his married wives. He should be pure and should not always be exercised by compassion. He should not seek too much female

companionship. He should take wholesome food and never that is bad".

9. "He should without pride pay respect to worthy persons, and serve his preceptors and seniors with sincerity. He should seek prosperity, but never do anything that brings calumny."

10. "He should serve his elders with humility. He should be clever in business, but should always wait for the opportune moment. He should solace men and never send them away with empty words. Having favoured a person, he should not cast him off."

11. "He should never strike in ignorance. Having killed his enemy he should never be sorry. He should display anger, but should never do so, when there is no occasion. He should be mild, but never to the offenders.

12. "Behave thus while ruling your kingdom if you wish to enjoy prosperity. The king that behaves otherwise is visited by great calamities".

13. "The king, who observes all these virtues that I have mentioned, enjoys many blessings on earth and great rewards in heaven".

Bhoja's preceptor, Muni Sārasvata, like Bhīṣma, felt an urge to stimulate the sense of 'svadharma' in the mind of Bhoja who wanted to abdicate. His abdication i. e. withdrawal of a strong power, should have hastened the collapse of an empire, which stood as the guardian of Madhyadeśa. It is for this reason that the old stimulus of the epic age is served to Bhoja with new vigour and vitality needed to rejuvenate the political system of Bhoja.

Bhoja was, by nature, a man of martial character (dīrgha-bāhuḥ). But in the heart of Bhoja, the pious (dharmyaḥ), the religious fervour was further kindled by the character of Doe, who related the stories of her past births. We know that Aśoka in the past felt great remorse after the conquest of Kalinga.¹ Similarly Yudhiṣṭhira had also suffered from the pangs of agony within and

1. cf. Aśoka's R. E. XIII.

he wanted to retire into forest.¹ But he was dissuaded in his ascetic venture ; for the salvation of a Kṣatriya ruler lies in his adherence to Rājadharmā or Kṣātradharmā.²

The Skanda Purāṇa presents this list with some changes dictated by urgency of the times. Undoubtedly a period of over half a century when Bhoja ruled was full of turmoils, difficulties and conquests in all directions. The success of Bhoja as a ruler in such an era of crisis lay in his person gifted with all the virtues and qualifications (sarvalakṣaṇa-sampūrṇo),³ which are enumerated by the Skanda Purāṇa in the tone of Bhīṣma. Nārada warned Bali about the coming distress and decline to his sovereignty and state. Bali asked the sage to tell him the virtues which bring success to a king and his state :—

वैर्गुणैः कुरुते राज्यं राजा तान्वद मे विभो

Sk., VII. ii. 17. 83(i)

Nārada upheld the importance of 36 virtues for the prosperity of the State :—

षट्त्रिंशद्गुणसम्पन्नो राजा राज्यं करोति च ।

स राज्यफलमाप्नोति शृणु तत्कथयाम्यहम् ॥

Ibid., VII. ii. 17. 84.

Kauṭilya and Kāmandaka have classified qualities of a king under three categories viz., 'dhiguṇa', 'utsāha' and 'ābhigāmik'. But here we find no classification of the kingly qualities which may be described under the following heads :

1. DHARMĀCARAṆA—A king should perform his duties or practise his dharmas without showing any bitterness.

2. ĀSTIKYAM—A king should have faith in the Vedas and gods without having any attachment with the athiests.

1. Mbh., Śānti Parva, Chapters VII ; IX ; XVII ; XIX.

2. Ibid., XII. 38 ; XIV. 38(ii) ; XXII. 2-3 ; XXIII. 46 ; XXV. 35 ; XXXII. 2.

3. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 21.

4. षट्त्रिंशद्गुण is a mistake for 'षट्त्रिंशद्गुण'

cf. N. K. Edn., Skanda P., Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa, CCCXXIX. 85.

3. ARTHA-SAMGRAHA—King should acquire wealth without any harshness or cruelty.

4. KĀMA—King should enjoy pleasures ; but he should not be arrogant.

It should be noted that the above mentioned four qualities are associated with the attainment of 'trivarga'.

5. SWEET-SPEECH—A king should be gentle in his speech, but without showing any sign of lowliness.

6. HEROISM—A king should be valarous but free from boasts.

7. CHARITY—A king should be liberal, but he should not abandon the state revenues.

8. PRAGALBHATĀ (BOLDNESS, COURAGE)—A king should be brave and courageous, but without being cruel.

These four qualities, 5 to 8, remind us of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta. This epigraph (line 30) concludes by attributing the three qualities of 'pradāna' (liberality), 'bhuja-vikrama' (prowess of arms) and 'praśama-sāstra-vākyodaya' (the excellence of speech based on the study of scriptures) which were the bases of the fame of the great Gupta ruler.

9. NO EVIL COMPANY—A king should not have friendship and company with ignoble persons.

10. NO QUARREL WITH ALLIES—A king should not quarrel with his brothers, friends and allies.

11. NO SERVICE THROUGH DISLOYALS—A king should not employ to his service, particularly, as spies or emissaries, the persons who are wanting in the loyalty and devotion or those who are ignobles and incredulous.

12. NON-INJURY—A king should not injure or do harm to anybody in the course of his actions leading to the fulfilment of his desires.

13. SECRECY—A king should not disclose his secrets or policies in the times of distress.

14. NO SELF-PRAISE—A king should not praise himself.

15. AVIRODHA—A king should not quarrel with the noble and saintly persons by seizing their wealth.

16. NO SUPPORT TO THE WICKED—A king should not depend upon the wicked.

17. PROPER EXERCISE OF DAṆḌA—A king should not award punishment (daṇḍa) without proper investigation.

18. Secrecy of counsel (mantra).

19. No charity towards greedy and covetous persons.

20. No reliance upon enemies and offenders.

21. 'DĀRA-GUPTI'—Women (of the palace) should be well-protected and watched through reliable persons.

22. Protection to other virtuous kings.

23. No excessive indulgence in women.

24. Purified and agreeable diet free from harm.

25. Respect to venerables without any selfish motive.

26. Service to teachers with devotion and respect.

27. Worship of the gods without religious hypocrisy.

28. Aspiration for splendour and unabused wealth.

29. Service to the goddess of wealth without attachment.

30. 'DAKṢATĀ'—He should be clever, not unmindful of the times.

31. Conciliatory speech.

32. Favour without abuse.

33. Immunity of Brāhmaṇas from punishment.

34. Complete annihilation of enemies.

Here we find a change in the policy. According to Śānti-Parva (LXX. 11a) a king should not repent after destroying the enemies. But Sknda advocates the complete destruction of enemies.

35. No frequent outbursts of anger.

36. No mercy towards enemies.

If the Skenda Purāṇa is to be relied upon — there is no reason to doubt its authenticity — Bhoja-rāja possessed all these virtues following relentless policy towards his enemies. In the assessment of the personality of Rāmabhadra, the information derived from the Gwalior Stone Inscription of Bhoja has not been viewed in the context of the Pratihāra political system.

“Northern and western India assumed a new significance during this period in view of the continuous threat of the Muslim invasion. That threat became a material factor in Indian history with the Arab occupation of Sind and reached a further stage with the Turkish occupation of the Punjab. Geography made the Rājput the Pratihāras or door-keepers of India”.¹ Gurjara-Pratihāras were the saviours of the Āryāvarta and its culture against the surging tides of the ‘world-conquerors’.

The origin of the Pratihāras has been discussed by different distinguished scholars. “The earliest inscription referring to the origin of the dynasty is undated Gwalior (Sagar-Tal) stone inscription of Bhoja I, according to which the ancestor of the family was Saumitri or Lakṣmaṇa, the younger brother of the Epic hero Rāma, who was the ‘door-keeper’ (pratihāra), since he repelled (the eneminess) in battle against Meghanāda. Moreover Vatsarāja is described as foremost among the most distinguished Kṣatriyas and as one who stamped the noble race of Ikṣvāku with his own name by virtue of his blameless conduct”.² Thus the dynasty of Pratihāras justified its origin and existence to the duty of door-keepers or ‘pratiharaṇavidhi’ (pratiharaṇa vidher yaḥ pratihāra āsīt).³ Dantidurga performed Hiranyagarbha ceremony at Ujjainī in which kings such as the Gurjara lord and others were made door-keepers”. This incident represents the appointment of Gurjaras and others as door-keepers of the country. Can it be believed that the Kṣatriyas or Rājput, howsoever subordinate and subservient be their status, would like to act as door-keepers? Gurjara Kṣatriyas accepted, with willingness, the task of guarding the national frontiers.

Purāṇas refer to a Kṣatriya king Pratihāra and his family :—

परमेष्ठी ततस्तस्मात् प्रतीहारस्तदन्वयः ।

प्रतीहारात् प्रतिहर्ता प्रतिहर्तुर्भुवस्ततः ॥

Agni P., CXVII. 14.

1. Dr. A. C. Banerjee, Lectures on Rajput History, pp. 1-2.

2. Ibid., p. 4

3. Gwalior Stone Ins. of Bhoja I, p. 162.

परमेष्ठी सुतस्तस्मात्प्रतीहारस्तदन्वयः ।

प्रतिहर्त्तति विख्यात उत्पन्नस्तस्य चात्मजः ॥

Kūrma P., XLI.

Thus the name Pratihāra tracing its origin and antiquity to the old Kṣatriya stock was deemed most appropriate for the defenders of the country's doors against the Arab invaders. Almost all the rulers of this dynasty stood firm on their post as Pratihāras. Nāgabhaṭa I destroyed the armies of mighty Mlecchas.¹ Vatsarāja too vanquished (wild) and intoxicated elephants (= Mlecchas, cf. my Indian Nationalism, Vol. I. Appendix III); by doing so Vatsarāja raised his family to fame and justified the title of 'Kṣatriya-puṅgava'.² Nāgabhaṭa II also defeated Saindhavas³ (Arabs) and Turuṣkas.⁴ Rāma (Bhadra), his son achieved fame in the battle-field by fighting against the valiant, vicious and violent people :

तज्जन्मा रामनामा प्रवरहरिबलन्यस्त भूभृत्प्रबन्धैरावघ्नन्वाहिनीनां प्रसभम-
धिपतीनुद्धतकूरसत्त्वान् । पापाचारान्तराय प्रमथन रुचिरः संगतः कीर्त्तिदारैस्त्राता
धर्मस्य तैस्तैस्समुचितचरितैः पूर्ववन्निर्वभासे ।⁵

It shows that the short reign of Rāmabhadra was occupied by his war against the Mlecchas and it was this pre-occupation in the western part of his empire, that some internal troubles occurred causing loss of some territories. Besides Arabs, Pālas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas were the traditional enemies of the Pratihāras. He was defender of Dharma and he seems to have died in the battle-field. Bhoja inherited, thus, from his father an empire which was in trouble. His enemies—internal and external—could only be crushed by Bhoja gifted with 'sarva-lakṣaṇas' viz., 36 kingly qualities. Of all these qualities the policy of blood and iron towards the enemies deserves attention. Sulaiman observes that 'He is unfriendly to the Arabs.....Among the princes of India, there is no greater

1. Gwalior Stone Ins. of Bhoja I, v. 4.

2. Ibid., vv. 6-7.

3. Ibid., v. 8.

4. Ibid., v. 11.

5. Ibid., v. 12.

foe of Muhammadan faith than he.....".¹ Gwalior Stone Inscription also upholds the chastisement of the Asuras (= Mlecchas) at the hands of Bhoja I :

यः शशास असुरान् घोरान्॥²

He dealt with his enemies according to the principles of Polity³ by his courage and valour.⁴ Gwalior Stone Inscription (verse 7) also showers encomium on the personality of Bhoja :

यशस्वी शान्तात्मा जगदहितविच्छेदनिपुणः
परिष्वक्तो लक्ष्म्या न मदकलंकेन कलितः ।
वभूव प्रेमाद्रौ गुणिषु विषयः सूनृत गिरा—
मसौ रामो वाग्ने स्वकृति गणनायामिह विधे ॥⁵

Bhoja had high respect⁶ for priest-preceptor, vipras, ācāryas, daivajñas, mantrajñas, bhiṣajas, and tāntrikas, all of whom were Brāhmaṇas,⁷ who advised the king on the important problems of the state and government. They were all summoned to the royal court, when the Vanapāla came to Bhoja from Saurāṣṭra with the news about the maiden. It is also proved by the sense of respect and devotion Bhoja had for his preceptor, Sārasvata.⁸ These sages also respected the majesty of Bhoja, whom they addressed 'deva'.⁹ He was righteous ruler (dharmyaḥ), knowing well his duty to people. Hence he was styled 'janeśvara'¹⁰, 'narendra',¹¹ and 'mahārāja'.¹²

The various characteristic features associated with the sacred name of Prabhāsa,¹³ may be attributed to Mihira (Bhoja) who

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1. Elliot and Dowson, History of India Vol. I, p. 4.
 2. Gwalior Stone Inscription, verse 22, last line.
 3. Ibid., verse 19, line 2.
 4. Ibid., vv. 21-22.
 5. Ibid., verse 17.
 6. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 51.
 7. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 47-48.
 8. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 57-58.
 9. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 55(i).
 10. Ibid., VII. ii. 10. 5.
 11. Ibid., VII. ii. 10. 18 ; VII. ii. 12. 11 ; VII. ii. 13. 32(i).
 12. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 61.
 13. Ibid., VII. i. 11. 44-50.

dispelled the dense darkness and distress. Glory of Prabhāsa Mahākṣetra is symbolised in the person of Prabhāsa (Bhoja). The entire 'Prabhāsika-khaṇḍa (VII) of the Skanda Purāṇa seems to have been redacted in his court. He was a great military leader. It was this exalted majesty of Bhoja's personality, which is presented in the veiled form (as it is here ascribed to Bali) :

एकातपत्रां पृथिवीं बुभुजे स नराधिपः ।

तैलोक्यनाथेति महानृपेति संग्रामविद्या कुशलेति नित्यम् ।

तैलोक्यलक्ष्मीकुचकामुकेति संस्तूयते चारण बन्दिवृन्दैः ॥

Sk., VII. ii. 14. 41

The mighty monarch is portrayed as seated on the horse-back (aśvādhirūḍho balavān Bhojarājo).¹

EXTENT OF THE EMPIRE

Thus Skanda upholds the supremacy of Bhoja's sovereignty which was based on the extent of his empire. "The city of Kānyakubja was raised to the dignity of an imperial capital by Harṣavardhana. But, though his empire collapsed with his death, the glamour of Kanauj was revived by Yaśovarman".² It was turned into a vast empire styled 'mahādeśa' ruled by Bhoja :

कान्यकुब्जे महादेशे राजा भोजेति विश्रुतः³

The extensive nature of Kānyakubja-Mahādeśa is also supported by the number of villages viz., 36 lakhs which it comprised.⁴ This large number of villages also reflects the prosperity of the Kānyakubja-deśa based on the state-revenue, basis of which was a village.

According to the Skanda Purāṇa the status of Kānyakubja deśa was already raised to a place of glory during the reign of

1. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 29(ii).

2. A. I. K., Preface, p. xxxiii ;

3. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 141(ii).

4. Ibid., I. ii. 39. 129(ii)

Aparājita-Pṛcchā, XXXVIII. 3(i) :

कान्यकुब्जे ग्राम संख्या षट्त्रिंशल्लक्षकाणि च ।

Āma (= Nāgabhaṭa II) who is stated to have attained the status of a paramount ruler.¹

The story of Bhoja and 'Mṛgānanā' woman found in the Vastrāpatha Māhātmya shows that not only Saurāṣṭra and Kathiawar formed part of the empire of Bhoja, but it also comprised Kurukṣetra and the neighbouring region extending upto the river Sarasvatī.² There lived the sage Sārasvata, the preceptor of Bhoja, who himself visited his hermitage taking bath in the vāgurā river Sarasvatī.³

BHOJA AND GUHILAS

The army of Bhoja also comprised 'Vāguras' of many types (Vāgurānām tvanekadhā)⁴ who had accompanied Bhoja with their traps. The Mṛga-vakrā lady (the woman with the face of a doe) had fallen in their trap (nipatitā vāgurāyām).⁵ Thus the term Vāgurika meaning a fowler or a hunter is based on the word i. e. a trap.

Kaṭṭilya in his Arthaśāstra observes that, "The interior of the kingdom shall be watched by trap-keepers (vāgurika), archers (śābara) hunters (pulinda), caṇḍālas and wild tribes (araṇya-carā)".⁶

Thus like Śabarās and Pulindas, the Vāgurikas — the wild tribal people — belonged to a particular territory called Vāguri-deśa which comprised 80 thousand villages.⁷

This is placed near Mewar and it was known by the name of Bāgari, Bāgaḍa or Vāgaḍa (modern Dungarpur District in Rajas-

1. Skanda, III. ii. 36. 34-35 ; (cf. chap. V)

2. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 55

3. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 56-57 ; cf. Pṛthūdaka Ins. of Bhojadeva ; T.H.K., p. 244).

4. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 26(i).

5. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 33.

6. Arthaśāstra (English translation, Shamasastri) Book II, p. 45.

Ibid., (text) II. i. 19 :

वागुरिकशबरपुलिन्दचण्डालारण्यचरा रक्षेयुः ।

7. Skanda, I. ii. 39. 140.

than).¹ According to Dr. G. H. Ojha the whole area now occupied by Dungarpur and Banswara is known as Vāgaḍa.²

Thus the inclusion of Vāgūrikas or the wild people (āraṇyakas) of Vāguri-deśa in the army of Bhoja shows his hold over the country which was a part of Mewar and where Guhilas had been ruling. From the Catsu inscription of Bālāditya we learn that Harṣarāja Guhila was a feudatory of Bhoja.³

"Again, the Partabgarh inscription of the Pratīhāra Mahendrapāla II, shows that in V. S. 999 (c. 942 A. D.) the Medapāṭa Guhila Bhartṛpaṭṭa II, son of Khommāṇa III, still acknowledged the sovereignty of the Kanauj emperor".⁴ Dr. H. C. Ray concludes : "There is no doubt therefore that from about the middle of the 9th to the middle of the 10th century the Guhilas occupied the position of feudatories of the powerful Pratīhāra empire."⁵

ABDICATION OF BHOJA

The abdication of Bhoja, on the basis of Vastrāpatha Kṣetra Māhātmya has been discussed by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, Dr. R. S. Tripathi, Dr. B. N. Puri, and by the author⁶ of these pages himself. It has been shown there that the discussion is irrelevant.⁷ Bhoja did not abdicate, even temporarily as the story mentioned in the Vastrāpatha Kṣetra Māhātmya tells us. It was only a resolve, which did not materialise. In view of the crisis caused by the internal and external dangers to the stability of the state, it was not deemed desirable that the empire, which he himself had consolidated, should suffer. Hence rightly his preceptor asked not to venture on such hasty step. Moved by the emotions and religious fervour stimulated by the sanctity of the Raivataka hill, a celebrated abode of Bhava (Śiva), Gaurī, Skanda, Gaṇeśvara and Viṣṇu,⁸ Bhoja thought :—

1. D. H. N. I., Vol. II, p. 860.

2. Rājapūtānā Kā Itihāsa, p. 453.

3. T. H. K., p. 239 ; H. G. P., p. 56 ;

E. I. XII, p. 15, v. 19.

4. E. I., Vol. XIV, pp. 176 Part III.

5. D.H.N.I., Vol. II, pp. 1161-1162, also cf. p. 1169.

6. St. Sk., I. pp. 194-196.

7. Ibid., p. 195.

8. Skanda, VII. ii. 10. 11-14.

त्यक्त्वा राज्यं प्रियान्पुत्रान्पत्न्यश्वरथकुञ्जरान् ।
 पुत्रं राज्ये प्रतिष्ठाप्य गन्तव्यं निश्चितं मया ॥
 त्वत्प्रसादाच्छ्रुतं सर्वं गम्यते यदि दृश्यते ।
 तीर्थयात्राविधानेन भवो वस्त्रापथे हरिः ॥
 सूर्यलोकं सोमलोकमिन्द्रलोकं हरेः पुरम् ।
 ब्रह्मलोकमतिक्रम्य यास्येऽहं शिवमंदिरम् ॥
 श्रुत्वा हि वाक्यं विविधं नरेन्द्रात्प्रहृष्टरोमा स मुनिर्वभूव ।
 जिज्ञासमानो हि नृपस्य सर्वं निवारयामास मुनिर्नरेन्द्रम् ॥
 गृहेऽपि देवा हरविष्णुमुख्या जलानि दर्भा नृपते तिलाश्च ।
 अनेकदेशांतरदर्शनार्थं मनो निवार्य नृपते त्वयेति ॥¹

But Bhoja became very sad and dejected to hear such disheartening words from his preceptor, who further dealt with 'tīrtha-yātrā-vidhi' at the request of the emperor.²

Sārasvata emphasised the religious importance of pilgrimage in the company of wife, friends, sons, brothers and relatives.³ The subsequent chapters of Vastrāpatha Māhātmya mention different stories dealing with important episodes only to console and convince Bhoja. Ultimately Bhoja, satisfied by the counsel of Sārasvata, went on pilgrimage to Vastrāpatha Kṣetra along with the members of his family. In the end he attained the highest place of bliss (by adhering to his dharma).⁴ Thus evidently Bhoja did not leave his throne and kingdom. On the other hand it upholds the importance of Rājadharmā as compared to that of renunciation. Similar crisis occurred in the life of Yudhiṣṭhira, who also wanted to retire. But his brothers, Bhīṣma, Kṛṣṇa and others prevailed upon Dharmarāja to protect the hard-won empire :⁵

1. Skanda, VII. ii. 10. 15-19.

2. Ibid., VII. ii. 11. 1-4.

3. Ibid., VII. ii. 12. 4.

4. Ibid., VII. ii. 19, 33-34 :

इति सारस्वत वचः श्रुत्वा भोजः स भूपतिः ।
 नमस्कृत्य मुनिश्रेष्ठं पूजयामास भक्तितः ॥³³
 ततो यथोक्त विधिना स भोजो नृपसत्तमः ।
 वस्त्रापथक्षेत्रं यात्रां परिवार जनैः सह ॥
 कृत्वा कृतार्थतां प्राप्तो जगामान्ते परं पदम् ॥³⁴

5. Mbh., Śānti Parva, Chap. XXXIII.

अवाप्तः क्षत्रधर्मस्ते राज्यं प्राप्तमकण्टकम् ।
रक्षस्व धर्मं कौन्तेय श्रेयः यः प्रेत्य भारत ॥

Śānti Parva, XXXIII. 48.

The Mahābhārata asserts that "Having performed all his duties and having protected the earth and having also protected the cities, a king enjoys great happiness in heaven. Of what use are penances to that king, what need has of sacrifices, who protects his people properly".¹ Hence Bhoja was like Yudhiṣṭhira asked by his preceptor to adhere to his duty of giving protection to the people, which leads to attainment of the heaven.² Thus the alleged abdication of Bhoja was not desirable in the age of crisis. Kūrma Purāṇa also asserts the importance of 'svadharma', which is not to be neglected. One, who goes on pilgrimage deserting his duties, does not obtain the merits of his devotional service to the sacred spots :

यः स्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य तीर्थसेवां करोति हि ।
न तस्य फलते तीर्थमिह लोके परत्र च ॥

Kūrma P., II. 43. 20

Thus it was the only right course of action for Bhoja to submit to the dictates of the times. His preceptor and the Śāstras also stimulated his sense of duty. Hence, it is true, the abdication of Bhoja never materialised.

The Skanda Purāṇa, itself, does not commend pilgrimage at the cost of royal duties. It asserts that the sages have prescribed only one royal duty for kings and that is the dharma of giving protection to his people. It was more important than the performance of sacrificial rituals and pilgrimage :—

राज्ञां ऋतुक्रियाभ्योऽपि तीर्थेभ्योऽपि समन्ततः ।
प्रजा पालनमेवैको धर्मः प्रोक्तो मनीषिभिः ॥

Skanda, IV. ii. 52.58.

1. Mbh. Śānti p. LXIX. 72-73 :

कृत्वा सर्वाणि कार्याणि सम्यक् सम्पात्य मेदिनीम् ।
पालयित्वा तथा पौरान् परत्र सुखमेधते ॥ 72
किं तपसा राज्ञः किं च तस्याध्वरैरपि ।
सुपालितप्रजो यः स्यात् सर्वधर्मविदेव सः ॥ 73

4. Ibid., LXIX. 105 :

तस्मात् कौरव्य धर्मेण प्रजाः पालय नीतिमान् ।
एवं वृत्तः प्रजारक्षन् स्वर्गं जेतासि दुर्जयम् ॥

ADMINISTRATION

Vastrāpatha-Kṣetra Māhātmya throws important and interesting light on the administrative ideals and institutions on which was based the powerful kingdom of Bhoja. The personality of a ruler—his merits and demerits—have a great bearing on his government and people.

Skanda portrays Bhoja, like the other sources of the great Pratihāra ruler, as a mighty king fully harnessed with the requisites of a military leader seated on horseback (aśvādhirūḍho balavān Bhojarājo).¹ He himself commanded his forces. He had full confidence in his strength, which was based on the well-organised army.

His government was based on the views of the people as well as on the dictates of the śāstras,² which guided the royal counsellors in their deliberations on the business of the state.³

Dharma was the basis of Bhoja's administration and Bhoja adhered to his dharma towards his people (rājā Bhojeti..... dharmaḥ prajā dharmeṇa śāśati).⁴ Protection of the people is held to be the sacred duty of Kṣatriya kings.⁵ Thus the dharma upheld here as the foundation of Bhoja's government corresponds to Rājadharmā, which is the supreme duty of kings (rājñām vai paramo dharma) :⁶

सर्वे धर्मा राजधर्म प्रधानाः

सर्वेवर्णाः पाल्यमाना भवन्ति ।

सर्वस्त्यागो राजधर्मेषु राजं—

स्त्यागं धर्मं चाहुरग्न्यं पुराणं ॥ ⁷

1. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 29

2. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 52(ii)

3. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 52-54.

4. Sk., VII. ii. 6. 20.

5. Mbh., Śānti Parva (Gita Press Edn.), XXIII. 46(i).

6. Ibid., LVI. 2(i).

7. Ibid., LXIV. 27.

Bhoja stimulated by 'tyāga-dharma' wanted to retire placing his kingdom and army under the care of his son. But the exigencies of the Rājadharmā dissuaded him to stay at the home. The king accepted the advice of Sārasvata, his conscientious preceptor, (cf., the case of Yudhiṣṭhira who, too, wanted to retire. But his brothers, Bhīṣma and Kṛṣṇa etc. told him the importance of Rājadharmā. (cf. Śānti Parva, Chaps. VII to XXXIII). Like the epic thinkers, Bhoja was also told not to abdicate, as all the religious merits can be realised by adhering to Prajādharmā.¹ The success of Bhoja's administration is reflected by his age styled 'Puṇyayuga'², where Skanda refers to the time of Āma (Nāgabhaṭa II) as Kali-age characterised by religious conflicts between Brāhmaṇas as well as Buddhists and Jains.³ Bhoja's reign was marked by the policy of religious tolerance.

Probably there were many queens in the palace.⁴ The chief queen was styled 'paṭṭa-mahiṣī'.⁵

Purodhā (guru), the royal preceptor,⁶ held high office in the state.

SENĀDHYAKṢA OR BALĀDHYAKṢA

The army of Bhoja was well-organised and fully equipped as we know from the account of his army sent to besiege the Raivatāka hill.⁷ Senādhyaṁśa⁸ or Balādhyaṁśa⁹ represents "the superintendent or commander of an army, a general, or minister of war".¹⁰ Senādhyaṁśa or Balādhyaṁśa seems to be the commander-in-chief who was the head of the military department of the state.

1. Mbh. Śānti p. LXXI. 27-33.

2. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 20.

3. St. Sk., I. pp. 189, 192-193.

4. Gwalior Stone Inscription of Bhoja, v. 25.

5. Skanda, VII. ii. 7. 81 ; cf. T. H. K., p. 338.

6. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 47, 50 ; cf. T. H. K., p. 341.

7. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 25-39.

8. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 25, 29.

9. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 34.

10. M. S. E. D., p. 723.

He played an important part in an efficient organisation of the army. He was subordinate only to king, whom he accompanied in the military campaigns.¹ He was also called Senāpati.²

Bhoja's army (sainyam)³ comprised of infantry (pattayo),⁴ cavalry (aśva),⁵ elephants⁶ and chariots (ratha)⁷—the traditional four wings of the army (chaturāṅg abala). The mainstay of Bhoja's army was the cavalry. Ten thousand horse-men were ordered to proceed to Raivataka.⁸ The army also comprised vāguras of many types (vāgurānām tu anekadhā). Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya refers to Vāgurikas (trap-keepers).⁹ It was well-equipped with weapons of war (śāstrāstra).¹⁰

VANAPĀLA¹¹

He was a forest-officer of high status reflected by the reward he received from Bhoja viz.,—

- (i) four horses (chaturām turagam)
- (ii) fine robes (divya vāsasī) and
- (iii) golden ornaments (svarṇa-bhūṣaṇam).¹²

PRATIHĀRA¹³

Pratihāra or door-keeper is also mentioned to be an official of Bhoja.

1. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 25.
2. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 39(ii).
3. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 28, 39.
4. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 26.
5. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 45, 46.
6. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 45, 46.
7. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 45.
8. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 26.
9. A. S. (4th Edn., Mysore, 1951), p. 45.
10. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 28.
11. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 22, 28, 31.
12. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 25(i).
13. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 47, 48.

Daivajñas (astrologers),¹ Mantrajñas (counsellors), Bhiṣajas² (physicians), and Tāntrikas³ (persons well-versed in the Tantras as well as in Tāntrik rites) held important office in the royal court.

There are also references to 'Mahadāścarya-bhāṣakas'⁴ (curio-commentators) and 'Saṁjñā-saṅketa-bhāṣakas'.⁵ Thus we see that the administration of Bhoja was so well-organised that the people living in the provinces (janapada janāḥ)⁶ as well as those who lived in the cities (nāgarāḥ)⁷ were happy and prosperous.

His Gwalior Stone Inscription (v. 26) aptly hails the reign of Bhoja for ever :

यावन्नभः सुरसरिप्रसरोत्तरीयं
यावत्सुदुश्चर तपः प्रभवः प्रभावः ।
सत्यञ्च यावदुपरिस्थ (ष्ठ) मवत्येषं
तावत्पुनातु जगतीमियमार्यकीर्त्तिः ।

1. cf. T. H. K., p. 342 (h) Naimittika.

2. Ibid., p. 342, (g).

3. Skanda, VII. ii. 6. 47(ii)-48(i).

4. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 38.

5. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 30(i).

6. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 37(i).

7. Ibid., VII. ii. 6. 38(i).

CHAPTER VIII

UPENDRA-RĀJA

The political and cultural history of the early Medieval India runs like a commentary on the incarnatory maxim which holds that whenever there is decline of dharma, and adharma is ascendant, I (God) appear in the world. For the protection of the virtuous and for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma on a firm footing I am born from age to age :—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मं संस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥¹

The dominance of Asuras and Mlecchas led to the defeat of the gods and to the destruction of Dharma :

योऽसौ महाबलो दैत्यो हिरण्याक्ष इति स्मृतः ।
दुष्टभावसमापन्नो देवब्राह्मणनिदकः ।
जित्वा च सकलान्देवान्स्वयमेवाधितिष्ठति ॥
स्वर्गाग्निराकृताः सर्वे भ्रष्टराज्याः पराजिताः ॥
विचरन्ति यथा मर्त्यास्तेन देवगणा भुवि ।
स्वधाकारो वषट्कारः स्वाहाकारो न दृश्यते ॥
देवपूजार्चनं नास्ति ब्राह्मणानां विशेषतः ।
नैव तीर्थं प्रकाशेत पुण्यान्यायतनानि च ॥
आश्रमेषु च सर्वेषु ऋषीणां च महात्मनाम् ॥
उद्धृतं च प्रकुर्वन्ति दुष्टदैत्याः प्रहारिणः ॥
वर्णाश्रमवतां धर्माः स्त्रीणां चैव सुशीलता ॥
उच्छिन्ना हि तदा जातास्तस्मिन्नाज्ञि दुरात्मनि ॥
दुष्टाचारा दुरात्मानो मायिनो बहुमानिनः ॥
पाखण्डिनोऽपराक्रांताः सर्वे धर्मबहिर्मुखाः ॥

1. Bhagavadgītā, IV. 7.

पशुधर्मरताः सर्वे सर्वे ब्रह्मेतिशंसिनः ॥
 बहुम्लेच्छा बहुक्लेशा बहुबाधावनी कृता ।
 को वेदः का स्मृतिः पुण्या को यज्ञः का च दक्षिणा ॥
 तमीभूतं जगत्सर्वं दृश्यते वसुधातले ।
 एवं व्यास यदा जातं दुष्टं सर्वं जगत्त्रयम् ॥
 यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ॥
 अश्रुत्यानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
 इति ज्ञात्वा महाविष्णुर्वाराहं वपुरात्मवान् ॥
 दध्मर लीलया दिव्यं श्वेतद्वीपोपमं शुभम् ॥¹

Thus Ādivarāha (Bhoja) had rescued the dharā and dharma by destroyoying the demons (hatāste dānavāḥ sarve)² in many battles. The achievements of Ādivarāha-Bhoja have been discussed in the last chapter. Paramāras followed the same policy in giving protection to country and to its culture.

Avanti before the advent of Ādivarāha (Bhoja) had suffered at the hands of heretics during the reign of Āma (Nāgabhaṭa II). Ujjayinī had also been besieged by the Arabs. The Āvantya Khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa not only deals with the glorification of the sacred spots of Avanti but also it reflects the age of Devāsura war i. e. the struggle between the Kṣatriya rulers and the alien invaders.

While describing the shrine of Lumpeśvara set up by Lumpa or Lumpādhīpa³ i. e. the king of Lumpa or Lampāka (Lamghan region), the Skanda Purāṇa mentions him to be accompanied by Tuṣāras (people of Tokharistan), Barbaras (or Daradas), Lumpas (people of Lampāka or Lamghan), Pahlavas (probably Persians) and Śvagaṇas (the people of Sogdenia). These people are styled Mlecchas.⁴ This is a clear reference to the Turkish invasion, which caused havoc to hermitages, sages and cow.⁵ Thus Avanti

1. Skanda, V. i. 52. 31-42.

In the Navasāhasāṅka Carita, Sindhurāja (Navasāhasāṅka) is mentioned to have rescued the earth like Varāha (NSC., I. 60)

2. Skanda, V. i. 52. 48-49.

3. Ibid., V. ii. 41. 2.

4. Ibid., V. ii. 41. 6.

5. Ibid., V: ii. 41. 11-12.

had to face alien invasions which led to the age of crisis and catastrophe in the history of Mālavā. The Skanda Purāṇa aptly explains the name of Mālavā by saying that the region took the name of Mālavā due to the abundance of impurity (malasya bahu sambhūtyā Mālaveti prakīrtitā).¹ It indicates the dominance of Mlecchas who defiled sanctity of the region. Hence the God himself had to rush to the rescue of Dharā and Dharma. He appeared in the form of Upendra.

“The first historical person in the line of Paramāra appears to have been Upendrarāja. This name is given by Padmagupta and the Udaipur Praśasti. But the land-grants of the family often trace the genealogy to one Kṛṣṇarāja. The identification of these two princes is generally accepted.....Padmagupta mentions Upendra as the first king of the line, and tells us that he performed numerous Vedic sacrifices. The same author related that a poetess named Sitā wrote a praśasti on his exploits.....The Udaipur praśasti the only other record which mentions Upendra, confirms Padmagupta's statements. The composer of this eulogy tells us that the fame of this prince was proclaimed by the immortals, satisfied by the multitude of all sacrifices, — who was a jewel among the twice-born (dvija-varga-ratna) and gained high honour of kingship (tuṅga nṛpatva-mānaḥ) by his valour”.² Both Navasāhasāṅka Carita and the Udaipur Praśasti uphold the greatness of Upendrarāja as a great conqueror. In valour he resembled Pṛthu (Pṛthupratāpo) and as a king he was like the Sun and the Moon (Upendra iti sañjajñe rājā sūryendusannibhaḥ). He decorated the earth with sacrificial pillars made of gold (akāri yajjvanā yena hema-yūpāṅkitā mahi) and he had defeated his enemies.³ The Udaipur Praśasti also eulogises Upendrarāja as

1. Skanda, I. i. 17. 276.

‘Mala’ here means ‘Kali-mala’ or the vices of Kali which were in ascendancy.

2. DHNI, Vol. II, pp. 844-845.

3. NSC., XI. 75-79 :

वंशः प्रववृते तस्मादादिराजान्मनोरिव ।
नीतः सुवृत्तैर्गुह्यतां नृपैर्मुक्ताफलैरिव ॥ 75
तस्मिन् पृथुप्रतापोऽपि निर्वापित महीतलः ।
उपेन्द्र इति सञ्जज्ञे राजा सूर्येन्दुसन्निभः ॥ 76
अकारि यज्ज्वना येन हेमयूपाङ्किता मही ॥ 78
अत्यच्छदशनोद्गच्छदंशुलेखतरङ्गिभिः ।
दीर्घैर्यस्यारिनारीणां निःश्वासैश्चामरायितम् ॥ 79

a jewel among the 'dvijas', who was a champion of Trayī dharma performing all the sacrifices and as a hero who had occupied the exalted office of kingship earned by means of his valour.¹ Paramāra, ādirāja of the Paramāra dynasly, is mentioned to have been born at Arbuda and Upendrarāja is mentioned to have been born in the family of Paramāra.² This shows that Upendrarāja annihilated demoniac people and extended his sway from Arbuda to Avanti.

The Avanti Khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa also contains a praśasti sung in the name of Upendra styled rājā.

NIRMARYĀDAṀ JAGAT (LAWLESSNESS)

The Skanda Purāṇa portrays an age of crisis characterised by wars between gods and demons.³ This led to lawlessness.⁴ Brahmā meditated upon the Lord Viṣṇu who appeared before him for the protection of the world (jagatām pātum).⁵ Brahmā began to recite prayers in the honour of the Lord :

देव देव जगन्नाथ जगत्सृष्टमिदं त्वया ।
ऋते त्वया जगद्विष्णो नैवावस्थातुमर्हति ॥
शास्ता त्वमस्य विश्वस्य विशुद्धस्य च नापरः ।
त्वत्तोस्तीदं जगत्सर्वं तस्मात्त्वमनुशासय ॥

1. Udaipura Praśasti, v. 7.

2. Ibid., vv. 5-6.

3. Skanda, V. i. 41. 2-5 :

वेधसा सृजितं विश्वं दैत्यदानवराक्षसम् ।
अन्योन्यमदसंमत्तमन्योन्यद्वेषि वै रणे ॥
देवाश्च दानवाः संख्ये नित्यं स्पर्धासमन्विताः ।
मनुष्या मनुजैः सार्धं सिद्धविद्याधरैः सह ॥
चारणाः किनरैः सार्धमेवं ते द्वेषतत्पराः ।
युद्धं कुर्वन्ति सततमविस्पष्टार्थया गिरा ॥
सर्वे चैव बलिनो दुर्बलैर्मनुजैः सह ।
पशवः पशुभिः सार्धं पक्षिणः सह पक्षिमिः ॥

4. Ibid., V. i. 41. 6 :

एवमन्योन्यमन्यैश्च निर्मर्यादमिदं जगत् ।
दृष्ट्वा विश्वस्य कर्तारं विष्णुं विश्वेश्वरं परम् ॥

5. Ibid., V. i. 41. 7-9.

देवदानवगंधर्वाः सयक्षोरगराक्षसाः ।

त्वामृते पुण्डरीकाक्षं व्यापिताशेषविग्रहाः ॥

परस्परं विनिघ्नन्ति तांश्च त्वं रक्षितुं क्षमः ॥

त्वमस्य विश्वस्य चराचरस्य स्थितेः सदा प्राणभृदात्मरूपिणी ।
त्वयाधृतं सर्वमिदं जगद्वै यतस्ततोऽसि त्वमुपेन्द्र संज्ञः ॥
प्रवेशनं व्याप्तमिदं स्वधाम यत्त्वमुच्यसे विष्णुरतो मुनीन्द्रैः ।
निवासितं विश्वमिदं त्वयाद्य वासश्च धातोरिति वासुदेवः ।
त्वानुगं विश्वमिदं विभुस्त्वमशेष विश्वस्य विभासि राजा ॥
सेनानुरूपं जगदेव यस्मादतः स्मृतस्त्वं किल विश्वसेनः ॥
विलेखनादस्य चराचरस्य कृतेश्च धातोस्त्वमतोऽसि कृष्णः ।
जितं त्वया देव जगत्त्रयं यज्जितेश्च धातोस्त्वमतोऽसि जिष्णुः ॥
तस्मात्समस्तग्रहलोकपालं जगद्विभो पालय सर्वकालम् ॥
त्वमस्य सर्वस्य भवादिराजस्तवास्तु भद्रासनमद्वितीयम् ॥¹

Thus like Udayapura Praśasti and Navasāhasāṅka Carita or like that of one composed by the poetess Sītā the Skanda Putāṇa also eulogises Viṣṇu, the saviour, who assumed different names associated with his different deeds. Thus Upendra was his name for supporting the whole universe (tvayā dhṛtaṁ sarvam idam jagad vai yatas tatōsi tvam upendra sañjñāḥ).² He was also called rājā.³ He was a great commander of army (viśvasenaḥ) called Kṛṣṇa.⁴ He was a great conqueror called jiṣṇu.⁵ He was Ādirāja.⁶

The Skanda Purāṇa further describes as to how Upendra-Visṇu founded Kuśasthalī, by spreading the kuśa grass over that sacred land.⁷ Here ruled the Lord of universe — the unique leader.⁸ Thus it is evident that this divine being who founded Kuśasthalī (one of the seven names of Ujjayinī) was none else than the great hero of the Paramāra dynasty called Upendra-rāja.

1. Skanda, V. i. 41. 12-20.

2. Ibid., V. i. 41. 16(i).

3. Ibid., V. i. 41. 17(ii).

4. Ibid., V. i. 41. 18.

5. Ibid., V. i. 41. 19(i).

6. Ibid., V. i. 41. 20(i).

7. Ibid., V. i. 41. 26-30.

8. Ibid., V. i. 41. 31.

CHAPTER IX

PRAMITI (DHANĀGA)

Pramiti is one of the most remarkable rulers of Ancient India, who appeared as the saviour of country and culture in the Kali-age, the age of national catastrophe. The Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ as has been stated above, mentions Pramiti as a son of Bhārgava Śūra who was contemporaneous with Śaśāṅka, the famous ruler of Gauḍa. But the account of Pramiti is invariably associated with the Kali-age, and so the Viṣṇudharmottaraṃ also showers encomium on the personality and achievements of Pramiti.¹ The Matsya Purāṇa too portrays the character of Pramiti in course of description of Kali-dharmas, 'a common motif portrayed in the Purāṇas'. The Matsya Purāṇa Chap. CXLIII (Jivananda Ed., Calcutta, 1876) runs thus :

एवं सन्ध्यांशके काले सम्प्राप्ते तु युगान्तिके ।
 तेषामधमिणां शास्ता भृगूणाञ्च कुले स्थितः ॥ 51
 गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसे नाम्ना प्रमितिरुच्यते ।
 कलिसन्ध्यांशभागेषु मनोः स्वायम्भुवेऽन्तरे ॥ 52
 समास्त्रिंशत्तु सम्पूर्णाः पर्यटन्वै वसुन्धराम् ।
 अस्त्रकर्मा स वै सेनां हस्त्यश्वरथसंकुलाम् ॥ 53
 प्रगृहीतायुधैर्विप्रैः शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
 स तदा तैः परिवृतो म्लेच्छान् सर्वान्निजघ्नवान् ॥ 54
 स हत्वा सर्वशञ्चैव राजानः शूद्रयोनयः ।
 पाषण्डान् स तदा सर्वान्निःशेषानकरोत् प्रभुः ॥ 55
 अधार्मिकाञ्च ये केचित्तान् सर्वान् हन्ति सर्वशः ।
 औदीच्यान्मध्यदेशांश्च पार्वतीयांस्तथैव च ॥ 56
 प्राच्यान् प्रतीच्यांश्च तथा विन्ध्यपृष्ठापरान्तिकान् ।
 तथैव दाक्षिणात्यांश्च द्रविडान् सिंहलैः सह ॥ 57
 गन्धारान् पारदांश्चैव पल्लवान्यवनान् शकान् ।

1. V. Dh., I. 74. 12-14.

तुषारान् बर्वरान् श्वेतान् पुलिन्दान् बर्वरान् खसान् ॥ 58
 लम्पकानान्द्रकांश्चापि चोरजातींस्तथैव च ।
 प्रवृत्तचक्रो बलवान् शूद्राणामन्तकृद् बभौ ॥ 59
 विद्राव्य सर्वं भूतानि चचार वसुधामिमाम् ।
 मानवस्य तु वंशे तु नृदेवस्येह जज्ञिवान् ॥ 60
 पूर्वजन्मनि विष्णुश्च प्रमतिनाम वीर्यवान् ।
 स्वतः स वै चन्द्रमसः पूर्वं कलियुगे प्रभुः ॥ 61
 द्वात्रिंशेऽभ्युदिते वर्षे प्रक्रान्तो विंशति समाः ।
 निजघ्ने सर्वभूतानि मानुषाण्येव सर्वशः ॥ 52
 कृत्वा बीजावशिष्टान्तां पृथ्वीं क्रूरकर्मणा ।
 परस्पर निमित्तेन कालेनाकस्मिकेन च ॥ 63
 सस्थिता सह सायासे सेना प्रमतिना सह ।
 गगायमुनयोमध्ये सिद्धिं प्राप्ता समाधिना ॥ 64

While commenting on the above account of Pramiti, Dr. V. S. Agrawala has identified Pramiti with Candragupta II. The learned Professor observes :—

“Pramiti, son of Candramasa, organised an extensive military campaign for the re-establishment of Dharma. He conquered the kings of the north (udīcyā), east (prācyā), west (pratīcyā), of the Vindhya region (Vindhya-pr̥sthā), of Koṅkaṇa (Aparāntaka), of the mountainous region (Parvatīyā), of Madhyadeśa and the south (dākṣiṇātyā). These were the seven divisions of India which the sovereign king Pramiti brought under his control. His sphere of conquest (cakra) included the kings of Draviḍas, Siṃhalas, Gāndhāra, Pārada, Pahlava, Yavana, Śaka, Tuṣāra, Barbara, Darada, Khasa, Lampāka, Śveta-Halika (probably White Hepthalites, M. 144. 55-58). It appears that this is a reference to the achievements of Candragupta well-known in history for the consolidation of the empire through conquests (Dharaṇibandha). The description agrees with Candragupta for several reasons :—

(1) His personal name was Deva.....

(2) His reigning period is mentioned as 32 years.....which was exactly that of Candragupta Vikramāditya (380-412)..... Thus the extent of his reign as 32 years agrees in the Purāṇa and inscriptions.

(3) It is stated that he was engaged in his military conquest for 20 years.....Historians also hold that the military operations of Candragupta had ended by 400 A. D.

(4) He was an incarnation of Viṣṇu which points to his being a Parama-Bhāgavata, as shown by his coins and inscriptions.

(5) He had carried out a gigantic programme of conquest including specially the kings of the north-west as Gāndhāra, Pārada, Pahlava, Yavana, Śaka, etc. This is a reference to the conquest of Candragupta upto Bāhlika as stated in the Mehrauli Pillar Inscription, and upto river Vaṅkṣu or the Oxus as described by Kālidāsa for Raghu.

(6) He was a king who set in motion the idea of Cakra (pravṛtta cakrah.....) i. e. the political cakra on the one hand and Viṣṇu's Cakra-Puruṣa on the other as shown by the Cakra-Vikrama coin of Candragupta Vikramāditya.

(7) He is specially mentioned as the exterminator of Śūdra kings (Śūdrānām antakṛt), which seems to be a reference to the uprooting of the Śakas of Western India.

(8) It is also stated that his vast army strong in cavalry (sasādhana) achieved its successful purpose in the country between Gaṅgā and Yamunā which is a reference to Madhyadeśa as the home-land of the Gupta empire (गंगायमुनयोर्मध्ये सिद्धिं प्राप्ता ससाधना, M. 144-63).

(9) He was the son of Candramasa (सुतः सवै चन्द्रमसः). We know from history that Candramā was the name of endearment for Samudragupta (R. K. Mookerji, The Gupta Empire, p. 17, चन्द्रप्रकाशो युवा).

(10) He was of the Candra Gotra (गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसः), a reference to the family of Candragupta I by which each king was a 'Gupta'.....

(11) In this significant inset of fourteen ślokas, a powerful and historically true description of the achievements of Candragupta Vikramāditya is given in the ringing tones of the Mehrauli inscription style. It is stated that for full 30 years the king was

marching in all directions of the earth with his four-fold army and was himself carrying arms (अस्त्रकर्मा). There is also a veiled reference which calls for attention. It is said that hundreds and thousands of Brāhmaṇas took up arms and joined his army :—

प्रगृहीतायुधैर्विप्रैः शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः । स तदा तैः परिवृतः ॥

M. 144. 53.

This appears to be a reference to the Licchavi contingent in Gupta army.....The Licchavis.....may be called Kṣātra-Brāhmaṇas.....¹

Before we discuss the identification of Pramiti, we propose to give below the extracts from the different Purāṇic works dealing with the account of Pramiti. The Vāyu Purāṇa also mentions Pramiti as a mighty ruler of Kali-age. While describing the Yugadharmanas, the Vāyu Purāṇa refers to great agitation (saṁkṣobha) caused by Kali.² It led to the decline of the country (desotsādaḥ) and dark night of distress³ an age of transition marked by distress and disturbances :—

एवं सन्ध्यांशके काले सम्प्राप्ते तु युगान्तिके ।

तेषां शास्ता ह्यसाधूनां भृगूणां निधनोत्थितः ।

Vāyu. P., I. 58. 75.

गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसो नाम्ना प्रमितिरुच्यते ।

माधवस्य तु सोऽंशेन पूर्वं स्वायम्भुवेऽन्तरे ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 76.

समाः स विंशति पूर्णाः पर्यटनं वै वसुन्धराम् ।

आचर्क्य स वै सेनां स वाजिरथकुञ्जराम् ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 77.

प्रगृहीतायुधैर्विप्रैः शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।

स तदा तैः परिवृतो म्लेच्छान् हन्ति सहस्रशः ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 78.

स हत्वा सर्वगश्चैव राज्ञस्तान् शूद्रयोनिजान् ।

पाषण्डान् स ततः सर्वान्निःशेषान् कृतवान् प्रभुः ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 79.

1. Matsya Purāṇa-A Study, pp. 228-231.

2. Vayu., I. 58. 36.

3. Ibid., I. 58. 68.

नात्यर्थं धार्मिका ये च तान् सर्वान् हन्ति सर्वशः ।

वर्णव्यत्यासजातांश्च ये च तानुपजीविनः ॥

Vāyū., I. 58. 80

उदीच्यान्मध्यदेशांश्च पार्वतीयांस्तथैव च ।

प्राच्यान्प्रतीच्यांश्च तथा विन्ध्यपृष्ठापरान्तिकान् ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 81

तथैव दाक्षिणात्यांश्च द्रविडान् सिंहलैः सह ।

गान्धारान् पारदांश्चैव पल्लवान् यवनांस्तथा ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 82.

तुषारान् बर्बरांश्चीनान् शूलिकान् दरदान् खसान् ।

लम्पाकानाथ केतांश्च किरातानाञ्च जातयः ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 83.

प्रवृत्तचक्रो बलवान् म्लेच्छानामन्तकृद्विभुः ।

अधृष्यः सर्वभूतानां चचाराथ वसुधराम् ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 84.

माधवस्य तु सौशेन देवस्य हि विजज्ञिवान् ।

पूर्वजन्म विधिज्ञैश्च प्रमितिनाम वीर्यवान् ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 85.

गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसः पूर्वं कलियुगे प्रभुः ।

द्वात्रिंशेऽभ्युदिते वर्षे प्रक्रान्ते विशति समाः ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 86.

विनिघ्नन् सर्वभूतानि मानवानि सहस्रशः ।

कृत्वा वीर्याविशेषान्तु पृथ्वीं रूढेन कर्मणा ।

परस्पर निमित्तेन कोपेनाकस्मिकेन तु ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 87.

स साधयित्वा वृषलान् प्रायशस्तानधार्मिकान् ।

गङ्गायमुनर्योमध्ये निष्ठां प्राप्तः सहानुगः ॥

Ibid., I. 58. 88.

This account of Pramiti found in the Vāyu Purāṇa fully agrees with that of Matsya. The Brahmāṇḍa (I. ii. 31. 75-89) also gives the traditional account of Pramiti almost in the same terms and tone.

The Vāyu Purāṇa, gives, again, a similar account of Pramiti in a chapter dealing with the Viṣṇu-māhātmya (Chap. 36, Uttarārdha) :—

एते लोकहितार्थाय प्रादुर्भावा महात्मनः ।

अस्मिन्नेव युगे क्षीणे सन्ध्याश्लिष्टे भविष्यति ॥

Vāyu., II. 36. 103.

कल्किर्विष्णुयशा नाम पाराशर्यः प्रतापवान् ।

दशमो भाव्य सम्भूतो याज्ञवल्क्य पुरःसरः ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 104.

अनुकर्षन् सर्वसेनां हस्त्यश्वरथसंकुलाम् ।

प्रगृहीतायुधैर्विप्रैर्वृतः शतसहस्रशः ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 105.

नात्यर्थं धार्मिका ये च ये च धर्मद्विषः क्वचित् ।

उदीच्यान्मध्देशांश्च तथा विन्ध्यापरान्तिकान् ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 106.

तथैव दाक्षिणात्यांश्च द्रविडान् सिंहलैः सह ।

गान्धारान् पारदांश्चैव पल्लवान् यवनाञ्छकान् ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 107.

तुषारान् ववरांश्चैव पुलिन्दान् दरदान् खसान् ।

लम्पाकानन्धकान् रुद्रान् किरातांश्चैव स प्रभुः ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 108.

प्रवृत्तचक्रो बलवान् म्लेच्छानामन्तकृद्बली ।

अदृश्यः सर्वभूतानां पृथिवीं विचरिष्यति ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 109.

मानवः स तु संजज्ञे देवस्यांशेन धीमतः ।

पूर्वजन्मनि विष्णुयः प्रमितिनाम वीर्यवान् ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 110.

गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसः पूर्णे कलियुगेऽभवत् ।

Ibid., II. 36. 111.

गंगायमुनयोर्मध्ये निष्ठां प्राप्स्यति सानुगः ॥

Ibid., II. 36. 117(i).

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa also exhibits its knowledge of Bhārgava Pramiti (Pramitir nāma Bhārgavaḥ),¹ who was surprised by the 'Bhānubhakti' of Rājyavardhana :—

तस्येति चरितं दृष्ट्वा प्रमतिनाम भार्गवः ।

विस्मयाकृष्ट हृदयो गाथामेतामगायत् ॥

Mārkaṇḍeya., CX. 35.

1. Mārkaṇḍeya P., (Jivananda Ed., Calcutta) ; CXIV. 31, 35 ; CXV. 1, 6.

भानुभक्तेरहो शक्तिर्यद्राजा राज्यवर्द्धनः ।
आयुषो वर्द्धने जातः स्वजनस्य तथात्मनः ॥

Mārkaṇḍeya., CX. 36.

According to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Pramiti of the Bhārgava family was son of Cyavana and he had married a princess.¹ But here we do not find the traditional account of Pramiti, as noticed elsewhere. But Matsya (CXLIII. 5), and the Viṣṇudharmottaram also hail Pramiti as a scion of the Bhṛgu-family.

The Skanda Purāṇa also contains the traditional history of Pramiti :—

कतुं धर्मव्यवस्थानमसुराणां प्रणाशनः ।
पूर्वजन्मनि विष्णुः स प्रमर्तिनाम वीर्यवान् ॥

Sk. VII. i. 19. 79

गोत्रेण वै चन्द्रमसः संध्यामिश्रे भविष्यति ।
कल्किर्विष्णुयशानाम पाराशर्यं प्रतापवान् ॥

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 80.

दशमो भाव्यसंभूतो याज्ञवल्क्यपुरःसरः ।
अनुकर्षश्च वै सेनां हस्त्यश्वरथसंकुलाम् ॥

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 81.

प्रगृहीतायुधैर्विप्रैर्भृशं शतसहस्रशः ।
निःशेषाञ्छूद्रराजस्तांस्तदा स तु करिष्यति ॥

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 82.

पाखंडान्मलेच्छजातींश्च दस्यूश्चैव सहस्रशः ।
नात्यर्थं धार्मिका ये च ब्रह्म ब्रह्मद्विषः क्वचित् ॥

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 83.

प्रवृत्तचक्रो बलवाञ्छूराणामंतको बली ।
अदृश्यः सर्वभूतानां पृथिवीं विचरिष्यति ॥

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 84

मानवस्य तु सोऽंशेन देवस्य भुवि वै प्रभुः ।
क्षपयित्वा तु तान्सर्वान्भाविनार्थेन नोदितान् ॥

गंगायमुनयोमध्ये निष्ठां प्राप्स्यति सानुगः ।

Ibid., VII. i. 19. 85.

1. Mārkaṇḍeya., CXIV. 29.

Thus we get here a historically true description of Pramiti. But his identity is shrouded in mystery. He seems to be a leader of the Brāhmaṇas like Śaśāṅka and many Brāhmaṇas fought under his leadership. Gupta age was marked by the religious tolerance and social harmony. There was no bitter crisis during this epoch in the Antarvedi and Dharma was not imperilled. Hence Pramiti despite close parallelism can not be identified with Candragupta II Vikramāditya. The account of Pramiti found, elsewhere, in the Skanda Purāṇa also does not lend support to the identification of Pramiti with Candragupta II.

The description of life in the four age-cycles styled Cāturyugi-vyavasthā is an important document of Hindu historiography, which also throws important light on ancient Indian chronology. Hence we quote the entire extract in original :—

अष्टाविंशे कलौ यच्च भावि तत्त्वं निबोध मे ।

Sk., I. ii. 40. 248(ii).

त्रिषुवर्षं सहस्रेषु कलैयातेषु पार्थिवः ।

त्रिंशतेषु दशन्यूनेष्वस्यां भुवि भविष्यति ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 249.

शूद्रको नाम वीराणामधिपः सिद्धिमत्र सः ।

चर्चितायां समाराध्य लप्स्यते भूभरापहः ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 250.

ततस्त्रिषु सहस्रेषु दशाधिकं शतत्रये ।

भविष्यं नंदराज्यं च चाणक्यो यान्हनिष्यति ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 251.

शुक्लतीर्थे सर्वपापनिर्मुक्तिं योऽभिलप्स्यति ।

ततस्त्रिषु सहस्रेषु विंशत्या चाधिकेषु च ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 252.

भविष्यं विक्रमादित्यराज्यं सोऽथ प्रलप्स्यते ।

सिद्धिं प्रसादाद्दुर्गाणां दीनान्यो ह्यद्वरिष्यति ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 253.

ततः शतसहस्रेषु शतेनाप्यधिकेषु च ।

शको नाम भविष्यश्च योऽतिदारिद्र्यहारकः ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 254.

ततस्त्रिषु सहस्रेषु षट्शतैरधिकेषु च ।

मागधे हेमसदनादंजन्यां प्रभविष्यति ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 255.

विष्णोरंशो धर्मपाता बुधः साक्षात्स्वयं प्रभुः ।

तस्य कर्माणि भविष्यन्ति महात्मनः ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 256.

ज्योतिर्विदुमुखानुग्रान्स हनिष्यति कोटिशः ।

चतुःषष्टिं स वर्षाणि भुक्त्वा द्वीपानि सप्त च ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 257.

भक्तेभ्यः स्वयंशो मुक्त्वा दिवं पश्चाद्गमिष्यति ।

सर्वेषां चावताराणां गुणैः समधिको यतः ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 258.

ततो वक्ष्यन्ति तं भक्त्या सर्वपापहरं बुधम् ।

चतुर्षु च सहस्रेषु शतेष्वपि चतुर्षु च ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 259.

साधिकेषु महान्याजा प्रमितिः (पा० प्रमतिः) प्रभविष्यति

गोत्रेषु वै चन्द्रमसो बहुसेनापतिबली ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 260.

म्लेच्छान्स कोटिशो हत्वा पाषाणानि च सर्वशः ।

वैदिकं केवलं शुद्धं सद्धर्मं वर्तयिष्याति ॥

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 261.

गंगायमुनयोर्मध्ये निष्ठां यास्यति पार्थिवः ।

Ibid., I. ii. 40. 262(i).

Here are references to Śūdraka, Nanda-rājya, Vikramāditya-rājya, Śaka, Magadhan king Budha, and Pramiti, whose epochs are discussed with approximate limits.¹ King Budha of Magadha is stated to have destroyed violent Jyotirbindumukhas, who may be identified with the Hūṇas. Hūṇas, we know, are called Mlecchas in the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta (verse 4). Mlecchamukha is a synonym of copper :—

ताम्रोदुम्बरं शुल्वं विद्यान्म्लेच्छमुखं तथा ।²

1. St. Sk., Part I, pp. 178-187.

2. Garuḍa P., I. 202. 65.

Thus Mleccha-mukha represents the coppery or reddish face of the Hūṇas and the same idea is indicated by the term 'Jyotir-bindumukhas'.

The epoch of Magadhan king Budha described in the above verses is 3600 K. E. e.i. Kali Era) — (3600 = 3102) = 498 A. D., which synchronised with the age of the Gupta ruler Budhagupta.¹

Thus the reign of king Pramiti is to be placed after the fall of the Imperial Guptas and the epoch assigned to Pramiti by the Skanda Purāṇa falls in the age of Āryāvarta-crisis. During this period characterised by horrors, there appeared, in the country, a great king named Pramiti (mahān rājā Pramitiḥ) of Candramasa gotra. He destroyed crores of Mlecchas as well as other heretics and, thus, he established Vaidik Dharma in the Antarvedī. He is stated to have flourished about 4400 K. E. i. e.²

4000-3102=1298 A. D. (चतुर्षु च सहस्रेषु शतेष्वपि चतुर्षु च)

It falls in the reign of Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī,³ when we can not place a strong ruler associated with the heroic achievements ascribed to Pramiti. Hence, if we take 4104 K. E. instead of 4400 K. E. (caturṣu ca sahasresu satesvapi caturṣu ca sādhiḥ) for Mahān-rājā Pramiti⁴ of Candramas gotra, we arrive at about (4104 K. E.-3102=) 1002 A. D. The beginning of the eleventh century A. D. marks the dawn of a new era—an era of crisis and catastrophe—caused by the Ghaznavide invasions.

चतुर्षु च सहस्रेषु शतेष्वपि चतुर्षु च ॥ २५९ ॥

साधिकेषु महान्राजा प्रमितिः प्रभविष्यति ।

गोत्रेषु वै चन्द्रमसो बहुसेनापति बली ॥ २६० ॥

म्लेच्छान्स कोटिशो हत्वा पाषंडानि च सर्वशः ॥

वैदिकं केवलं शुद्धं सद्धर्मं वर्तयिष्यति ॥ २६१ ॥

गंगायमुनयोर्मध्येनिष्ठां यास्यति पार्थिवः ।

ततः प्रजाश्च कालेन केनापि भृशपीडता ॥ २६२ ॥

1. St. Sk., Part I, p. 183.

2. Skanda, I. ii. 40. 259(ii)-262

3. Med. Ind., p. 599.

4. Skanda, I. 11. 40. 252 (ii)-260(i).

The decline of the Pratihāras created a void in the Madhyadeśa. The closing period of the 10th century A. D. and the beginning of the 11th century witnessed the rise of Gaznavids under the leadership of Subuktagin and Mahmud of Gazna, who fell upon Antardvī with all his force, fire and fury. Mahmud refused to spare Thanesar (Thāneśvara), as he wanted to root out the worship of the idols from the face of all India. "This answer was communicated to the Rājā of Dehli, who resolving to oppose the invaders, sent messengers through out Hindustan to acquaint the other Rājās that Mahmud, was marching with a vast army to destroy Thanesar.....He observed that if a barrier was not expeditiously raised against the roaring torrent, the country of Hindustan would be soon overwhelmed and every state small and great, would be entirely subverted. It, therefore, behoved them to unite their forces at Thanesar, to avert the impending calamity".¹

Pramiti of Candramasa-gotra was himself Candra (svataḥ sa vai candramasaḥ).² Skanda refers to many Candras of the past ; and one associated with Dattātreyā was ruling then, in the age of the Skanda Purāṇa. Rohiṇīnātha (Candra), contemporaneous with the epoch of the Skanda Purāṇa, represented Viṣṇu incarnate, whose earlier incarnations are stated to be Māndhātā, Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma), Rāma (Dāśarathi), Vyāsa, Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), Pramiti and Kalkī. Pramiti came to defend Dharma threatened by asuras in the Gangetic valley. He exterminated Mlecchas, Dasyus and 'Pākhaṇḍas' (Pāṣaṇḍas) who were hostile to Brahma and Brāhmaṇas.³ History also knows of many rulers named Candra viz., Candra of Mehrauli Pillar Inscription. Śaśāṅka-Gauḍādhīpa was also called Soma (Candra). In the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty, too, there were many rulers styled Candra⁴ and they also belonged to

1. Elliot and Dowson, Hist. Ind. Vol. II. Appendix, Note D, pp. 453-454.

2. Matsya P., CXLIII. 61(ii).

3. Skanda, VII. i. 19. 83.

4. Chandravati Plate of Candradeva, lines 7,
Saranath Inscription of Kumāradevī, lines, 5-6, 16,
Kamouli Copper Plate of Govinda Candra, lines 2,

Candramasa gotra.¹ But none of these rulers can be placed about 1002 A. D.

“The Candellas.....trace their descent from the Moon, in which respect the inscriptions of the dynasty as well as current traditions are almost unanimous. Candrātreyā has been adopted as the clan-name of the sage Candrātreyā, who has been claimed to be the progenitor of the family.....”²

The date 1002 A. D. falls in the reign of the Candella ruler, Dhaṅga, who is “said to have obtained the empire after defeating the Kānyakubja king, which means that he gave up even the formal acknowledgement of the Pratihāra suzerainty. By the year 954 A. D. his kingdom extended upto Yamunā in the north, Gwalior in the north-west, and Bhilsa in the south-west.....In course of his long reign, extending over the latter half of the tenth century A. D., Dhaṅga made further encroachments upon the territory of the Pratihāras, and seems to have extended his kingdom far to the north of the Yamunā and as far as Banaras in the east”.

“Dhaṅga also directed his arms against the Pālas and invaded Aṅga (Bhagalpur). He then proceeded to Rāḍha (West Bengal) and South Kośala, and also came into conflict with the kings of Āndhra and Kuntala. He also claims to have defeated the kings of Kratha, Simhala and Kānci.....”

“Dhaṅga’s known dates are 954 and 1002 A. D. He was the first independent Candella king and assumed the title Mahārājā-dhirāja. According to Firishta, the Rājā of Kālīñjara joined the confederacy of Indian chiefs organised by Jayapāla against Subuktagin”. “He must be identified with Dhaṅga.....”³ Thus Dhaṅga attained the status of a great ruler among the leading contemporary powers. He had established his firm hold on the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab upto confluence of the two rivers, where he ended his life voluntarily.....That Banaras was included in Dhaṅga’s dominions is indicated by the Nanyaura Plate of V. S.

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1. Kamouli Copper Plate of Govindacandra l. 6
 2. Mitra, S. K., E. R. Kh., p. 12.
 3. Majumdar R. C., A. I., pp. 307-308.

1055 (A. D. 998).....Dhaṅga, like his father, undertook expeditions in South India, as well as in Eastern India.

“A fragmentary inscription discovered at Mahoba throws an interesting light on the achievements of Dhaṅga—verse 17 of the record reads as follows :—

निमित्तवैरिभंगः श्री धंगः इत्यवनिमंगलमाविरासीत् ।

सारेण यः स्वभुज्योभुवनातिभारम् हंवीरमप्यतिबलं तुलयम् चकार ।,

“There appeared a blessing for the earth called Dhaṅga, who by the strength of his arms equalled even the powerful Haṁvīra, who had proved a heavy burden for the earth”.¹ Haṁvīra or Hammira denotes some Muslim ruler. “Yamini Sultans, themselves used the honorific Amira. Haṁvira must refer either to Subuktagin or his illustrious son, Mahmud of Ghazna. Hultsch identifies Haṁvīra of the Mahoba Record with Sabuktagin”.² There is close semblance between this record and the Purāṇic accounts of Kali age associated with Pramiti in the statements that the earth was greatly distressed and the kings appeared in the form of Viṣṇu to relieve it of the burden. Pramiti, too, appeared to re-establish Dharma by destroying Asuras :—

कर्तुं धर्मव्यवस्थानमसुराणां प्रणाशनः ।

पूर्वजन्मनि विष्णुः स प्रमत्तिनाम वीर्यवान् ॥

Sk., VII. i. 19. 79.

The struggle between ‘Devendra-danti’³ and ‘Mattadvipendra’⁴ had begun even in the days of Yaśovarman. The former represent ‘āśā-karīndras’, ‘diggajas’. or the defenders of the country ; whereas the latter represent the Mātāṅgas or the Muslim invaders.⁵ Rājāśekhara has also distinguished these two types of the elephants.⁶

1. E. I., i, p. 221 v. 17.

2. E. R. Kh., pp. 65-66.

3. Khajuraho Stone Inscription of Yaśovarman, v. 26, line 3.

4. Ibid., v. 28, line 1.

5. Awasthi, A. B. L., Prācīna Bhārata-kā-Bhaugolika Svarūpa, pp. 103-104.

cf. Awasthi, A.B.L., Indian Nationalism, Vol. I, Appendix III, Gaja-Śārdūla.

6. Kāvya-mīmāṃsā, p. 91/13-16.

But the wild elephants (Turks) were vanquished by Yaśovarman like a lion.¹ Śrī Dhaṅga was born to him like the moon issuing from the ocean to give pleasure to the people :—

श्री धङ्गः स्वभुज प्रसाधितमहीनिव्याजराज्यस्थिति—

स्तस्मादास महोदधेरिव विधुः सूर्जजनानन्द कृत ॥ ²

Verily, he (Dhaṅga) was Kṛṣṇa of the Vṛṣṇi-kula.³ He is stated to have conquered Kośala, Kratha, Siṃhala, Kuntala, Kāñcī Āndhra, Rāḍha, Aṅga, as well as Lokāloka-hill.⁴ It reflects his conquests in the different parts of the country viz., North, South and East. He is also stated to have founded the colonies of Brāhmaṇas and this settlement of the Brāhmaṇas looked like a second Kalāpagrāma.⁵ Kalāpagrāma, situated beyond the Himālayas,⁶ was a very sacred place, where lived eightyfour thousand Brāhmaṇas, well-versed in various branches of Vedic learning and thought.⁷ It shows how great was Dhaṅga as a patron of Brāhmaṇas like his own father Yaśovarman Deva.⁸

In the end, after living a life of more than a hundred years, king Dhaṅga gave up his life at Prayāga, the sacred confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, while meditating on Rudra and muttering his name in his heart. Thereby he attained Nirvāṇa (mokṣa).⁹ Dhaṅga, thus achieved Siddhi (in his mission).

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1. Khajuraho Stone Inscription of Candella Yaśovarman, v. 30, line 2 :

सद्यः सुप्तविवुद्ध केसरिरव त्रस्यत्करीन्द्राकुलाः ।

2. Ibid., v. 44, ll. 1-2.
3. Khajuraho Stone Inscription of Dhaṅgadeva renewed by Jayavarmadeva, vv. 42-43.
4. Ibid., vv. 45-47.
5. Ibid., vv. 53-54.
6. Skanda, I. ii. 5. 1 ; I. ii. 5. 31-34 ; I. ii. 6. 30-31
St. Sk., Pt. I, p. 9.
7. Skanda, I. ii. 5. 40.
8. Khajuraho Inscription of Dhaṅgadeva renewed by Jayavarmadeva, v. 32(i).
9. Ibid., v. 55.

Our arguments for identifying Pramiti with Dhaṅga are the following :—

- (i) their dates synchronise with 1002 A. D. ;
- (ii) both of them were great conquerors ;
- (iii) both of them were patrons of Brāhmaṇas and Brāhmanical culture ;
- (iv) both of them are stated to have attained Siddhi in Madhyadeśa ;
- (v) both were the defenders of the country against the dreaded Mlecchas ; and
- (vi) both of them gave up their lives at Prayāga. In the Matsya Purāṇa we get :—

संस्थिता सह सायासे सेना प्रमतिना सह ।

गंगायमुत्तर्योमध्ये सिद्धिं प्राप्ता समाधिना ॥ ¹

Dr. Agrawal read 'sasāadhanā' in place of samādhinā.² But latter reading i. e. 'samādhinā' is preferable. We know that Dhaṅga with his closed eyes meditating on and muttering the name of Rudra gave up his life at Prayāga and by so doing i. e. 'samādhinā', he attained Siddhi.

SAMĀDHI-SIDDHI

Dhaṅga achieved Mokṣa by his Prāṇa-tyāga, which was one of the popular faiths of this epoch. According to the Mahābhārata 'Śarīra-utsarjanam' or 'anāśakam' (anaśanam) performed according to its 'vidhi' leads to the attainment of Siddhi.³ According to the Skanda Purāṇa, Dehatyāga was a popular means of realising salvation.⁴ Skanda also describes its Vidhi or Vidhāna which comprised many religious rites leading to samādhi.⁵ The inscriptional passage fully conforms to Samādhi-siddhi :

1. Matsya P., CXLIII. 64.

2. Matsya Purāṇa A Study., p. 230.

3. Anuśāsana P., XXV. 63-64.

4. Skanda, V. iii. 4. 37 ; V. iii. 196. 5 ; V. iii. 217. 3.

5. Ibid., V. iii. 28. 121-126.

रक्षित्वा क्षितिमम्बुराशिरशनामेतामनन्यायति,
जीवित्वा शरदां शतं समधिकं श्रीधंगं पृथ्वीपतिः ।
रुद्रं मुद्रितलोचनः स हृदये ध्यायन्जपन् जान्हवी-
कालिन्ध्योः सलिले कलेवरपरित्यागादगान्निर्वृति ॥ ¹

Thus Pramiti or Dhaṅga, an exalted ruler of the Candrātreya or Candella family (Candramasa gotra) lived for a hundred years and in the end he abandoned the body in the waters of the Ganges and the Yamunā in accordance with rites of Prāṇa-tyāga. Thus he fully realised the fruits of human life viz., abhyudaya and niḥśreyasa. His reign was a long and distinguished one marked by his resistance to Turks and by his patronage to Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmanical culture and. The temples of khajurah bear evidence to his glorious epoch.

1. Khajuraho Stone Ins. of Dhaṅgadeva Renewed by Jayavar-
madeva, v. 55.

CHAPTER X

GĀHADA VĀLAS

The history of the Gāhadvālas has unique significance in the history of the Āryadeśa or Āryāvarta which they were called by the Providence to protect. This dynasty also produced such conquerors as Candradeva (cf., Candradeva vijayi, Candravati Plate of Candradeva, l. 7), and Govindacandra who was called upon to defend the sacred crty of Vārāṇasi against the attacks of the wild Turuṣkas :

वाराणसी भुवनरक्षणादक्ष एको
दुष्टद्वुरुष्कमुभटादवितुं हरेण ।
उक्तो हरिस्स पुनरत्र बभूव तस्माद्
गोविन्दचन्द्र इति प्रथितामिधानः ॥¹

The Purāṇas also throw valuable light on the history of this dynasty as is evident from the gleanings from the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa and the Skanda Purāṇa.

BHAVIṢYA PURĀṆA AND THE GĀHADA VĀLAS

While describing the advent of Kali and Mlecchas, the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa refers to the Mohammadan invasion of Sind and other countries of Western India. Guhilas defended the country defeating the Mlecchas.² Prajaya, son of Rāṣṭrapāla, a scion of the Guhila dynasty, is mentioned to have founded the city of Kānyakubja with the divine help of the Goddess Śārada. Prajaya seems to be an adventurous conqueror and a good horse-man who was also known as Jayapāla. His son was called Veṇuka-Mahīpāla.³

Veṇu begot a son named Yaśovigraha through his wife Viravatī. He was a pious and powerful ruler of Āryavarta.⁴

1. Sarnath Ins. of Kumāradevi, v. 16.

2. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga p., IV. 3. 1-38.

3. Ibid., IV. 3. 43-53.

4. Ibid., IV. 3. 61 :

नृपाद्वै वीरवत्यां च यशोविग्रह आत्मजः ।
बभूव बलवान्धर्मी चार्यदेशपतिः स्वयम् ।

The above account contains some grains of historical information. The Navasari grant of the Cālukya prince Pulakeśin Avani-janāśraya informs us that sometime before 739 A. D. an army of Arabs (Tājikas) advanced as far south as Navasārika in Gujarat after destroying on its way Saindhava, Kacchella, Sauras̥tra, Cāvoṭaka, Maurya and Gurjara princes".¹ Bappa, the great Guhila is known to have saved the country and culture against the iconoclastic fury and fire of the Tājikas.

The Guhilas were the feudatories of the Pratihāras. When king Bhoja had departed to heaven..... Candradeva appeared as the protector of the Āryāvarta, as we know from the Basahi Plate Inscription.²

ORIGIN OF THE GĀHAḌAVĀLAS

"The Gāhaḍvālas emerge into the light of history so suddenly that it is difficult to clear away the obscurity hanging over their origin".³ Dr. Tripathi refers to the different theories relating to the origin of the Gāhaḍavālas :

- (i) The numerous charters call them Kṣatriyas connected with the line of Yayāti.⁴
- (ii) "The Paurāṇik texts, at any rate, refer to a people called Gahvara or Girigahvara', who are described as dwellers in jungles and caves,⁵ and since 'Gahvara' might conceivably correspond in meaning to the Prakrit 'Gāhaḍa' (both words being derived from the same root), it may indeed be tempting to conjecture that the term 'Gāhaḍavāla' is equivalent to 'Gahvaravāsi'".
- (iii) "Pandit Bisheswar Nath Reu has, however, another theory to offer. He thinks that Gāhaḍavāla is used in the sense

1. C. I. I., Vol. IV, Ins. No. 30, p. 140, l. 24.

2. I. A., XIV, p. 103, l. 3.

T.H.K., p. 294.

3. Ibid., p. 296

4. Ibid., pp. 296-297

5. Ibid., p. 297, vide Wilson's Viṣṇu Purāṇa, p. 196.

of 'balavān' and that they were so called because they conquered the most important kingdom of the times".

- (iv) "Mr. C. V. Vaidya derives it.....from some place Gāhaḍa in the Deccan".

"Dr. R. C. Majumdar suggests that the Gāhaḍavālas were perhaps of Karaṇāṭaka origin (I. H. Q., VII, 1931, p. 634 note 1; T.H.K., p. 297, note 4).

- (v) "But some scholars affirm that the Gāhaḍavālas were a branch of the famous Rāṣṭrakūṭas or Rathors....."¹

Dr. Tripathi does not accept the Rāṣṭrakūṭa origin of the Gāhaḍavālas.² He is, however, inclined to identify the Gāhaḍavālas with Gahvaras or Girigahvaras.³ All the above views and theories have been mentioned by Dr. Roma Niyogi in her History of the Gāhaḍavāla Dynasty.⁴

Dr. Roma Niyogi also maintains that "The Gāhaḍavālas could not have belonged to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa clan".⁵ Dr. Niyogi further thinks: It is possible, as some scholars have suggested, that there is some geographical significance behind this name, but the inscriptions themselves point not to South India but to the newly conquered regions of the Gāhaḍavāla dominion, Pañcāladeśa".⁶

Dr. Niyogi observes that "Curiously enough the kings of this dynasty trace their origin, not from the sun or moon or any famous mythical personage, like most of the contemporay kings, but from a modest person, Yaśovigraha by name, who did not even assume a royal epithet".⁷

The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa refers to the foundation of the city of Kānyakubja by Prajaya (Jayapāla) whose son Veṇuka is

1. T.H.K., pp. 296-299.

2. Ibid., pp. 298-300.

3. Ibid., p. 297.

4. H.G.D., pp. 29-35.

5. Ibid., p. 32; cf. pp. 29-35.

6. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

7. Ibid., p. 28.

stated to be the father of Yaśovigraha¹. Prajaya was the son of Rāṣṭrapāla who was himself the son of Guhila². Guhila is the same as Guhadatta, founder of the dynasty of the Guhila-Putras³. Kālabhoja was known by the title of of Bappa⁴. Thus it is evident that Yaśovigraha, the first member of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty, was a scion of the Guhila family. As such, it is true, as Dr. Tripathi contended that, "Gāhaḍavāla is equivalent to Gahvaravāsi"⁵.

"Crooke suggests that, the word (Gāhaḍavāla) may have been derived from the Sanskrit word 'gahvara' or 'girigahvara' which was the name of a Purāṇic people who used to live in the caves"⁶. The Mahābhārata and the Padma Purāṇa mention the people known as Giri-Gahvaras⁷ as one of the tribes of Kirāta family⁸. The Guhilas were associated with the Bhīls of Iḍar. One of the adventurer of this stock moved from Chittor in Mewar to Kanauj which needed such a person. Thus it is not surprising if the Gaharwaras and Guhilas are yoked together⁹.

YAŚOVIGRAHA

Dr. Tripathi observes that "According to the testimony of the inscriptions Gāhaḍavāla dynasty was founded by one Yaśovigraha 'after the lines of the protectors of the earth born in the Solar race had gone to heaven',¹⁰ but it is not clear where he and his successor Mahīcandra.....ruled at first. In fact, the absence of royal titles

1. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga, IV. 3. 43-61.

2. Ibid., IV. 3. 38-39.

3. D.H.N.I., Vol. II, pp. 1154-1155.

4. Ibid., pp. 1158-1159.

5. T.H.K., p. 297.

6. H.G.D. p. 35, vide Crooke, T.C.N.W.P.O., Vol. II, pp. 371-73

7. Mbh., Bhīṣma P., IX. 68 (i).

Padma P., I. 6. 63.

8. Ibid., I. 6. 64(i) ; Mbh. Bhīṣma P., IX. 69(i).

9. T.H.K., pp. 299-300 vide R.N.W.I., Vol. I, p. 122 and Note ;

H.G.D., p. 33.

10. E.I., XIII, p. 218 ; IX, p. 304 etc. cf. T.H.K., p. 300, note 2.

in case of both, has sometime been taken to indicate that they were not even royal personages, although in records the former is called a noble (personage).....(who) by his plentiful splendour (was) as it were the sun incarnate"¹.

But "the Chandravati inscriptions of V. S. 1150 and 1156 further detail that the Kṣātra dynasty in which Yaśovigraha was born forcibly occupied Kānyakubja after the destruction of the descendants of king Devapāla.....the Pratihāra king".² "Another śloka in these Chandravati grants states that Yaśovigraha seized the earth and made her fond of the sceptre of the king (cf. tasmin varṁśe samutpanne Yaśovigraha samjñakaḥ vighraha medini yena daṇḍa-praṇayini kṛtā)³. Despite such references relating to the glorious achievements of Yaśovigraha, Dr. Roma Niyogi following Dr. Tripathi observes that "He may have ruled over a small territory ; he, however, appears to have been a subordinate chief, as the absence of any royal epithet before his name indicates".⁴ This is speculative. The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa clearly mentions Yaśovigraha as a powerful ruler of Āryadeśa :

Nṛpād vai Viravatyām ca Yaśovigraha ātmajaḥ.

Babhūva balavān dharmī ca Āryadeśapatiḥ⁵ svayam.

Āryadeśa represents Madhyadeśa here, in its narrow sense. He ruled for twenty years (viṁśad varṣam kṛtam rājyam tena rājñā mahitale).⁶

MAHĪCANDRA

Yaśovigraha was succeeded by his son Mahīcandra who was like his father (a powerful king) of Āryadeśa with his capital at Kānyakubja (Mahīchandras tasya sutaḥ pitus tulyam kṛtam

1. T.H.K., p. 300

Ind. Ant., XV, p. 7, v. 2 :

साक्षात् विवस्वान् इव भूरिधाम्ना नाम्ना यशोविग्रह इति उदारः ।

2. H.G.D., pp. 38-39

3. Ibid., p. 40

4. Ibid., p. 41

5. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga, IV. 3. 61

6. Ibid., IV. 3. 62(i).

padam)¹. He is highly praised in most of the Gāhaḍavāla inscriptions. His fame spread to the other side of ocean.² Such a conqueror, howsoever be vague the praises, cannot be believed to be a feudatory chief.

CANDRADEVA

Candradeva was a worthy son of Mahicandra and he ruled like his father over the country of Kānyakubja³ which he raised to the status of an empire.⁴

Withdrawal of a strong power from the centre of Antardvī—the puṇya-bhūmi—viz., Kānyakubja led to the influx of 'roaring elephants (Garjanaka gajendras) or Mātāṅgas who were intoxicated (matto yāti iti mātāṅgaḥ) with power and faith to destroy the roots and relics of Hindu culture and with it they aimed at the destruction of temples which were the nurseries of Hindu culture and thought. It was this aim which spurred Turuṣkas and Mleccha-hordes (Tuṣāras, Barbaras, Lumpas or Lampākas, Khasas, Daradas and Śvagaṇas) to invade the Gaṅgā-Yamunā-Doab. As long as Nāgabhaṭa II, Bhoja I and Mahendrapāla stood as the sentinels of Madhyadeśa, Āryan life and culture was secure. But after their death Pratihāras ceased to be the door-keepers of the Antardvī. Kānyakubja and Kāśī were sacked by the Ghaznavide forces. Kṣatriya rulers or the defenders of the country and its culture fled in terror leaving the country, its capital and temples at the mercy of the invader. Such cowardly rulers who could not give protection to the country, its people and the culture were styled Vṛṣalas i.e. degraded Kṣatriyas. History

1. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga, IV. 3. 62(ii).

2. H.G.D., p. 41.

3. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga, IV. 3. 63 :

चन्द्रदेवस्तस्य सुतो राज्यं तेन पितुः समं कृतं.....

4. Chandravati Plate Ins. of Candradeva, ll. 6-7 :

परमभट्टारकमहाराजाधिराज परमेश्वर.....

निजभुजोपाजित श्री कान्यकुब्जाधिपत्यश्री चंद्रदेवो विजयी ।

Ibid., ll. 4-6 ;

Kamouli Copper Plate Ins. of Govindacandra, ll. 4-5, 11-12.

knows that Rājyapāla, the scion of the Pratīhāra dynasty, was murdered by the Candella ruler. It exhibits the national feeling of indignation towards one who evaded svadharma (cf. Bhagavad-gītā, III. 35 : svadharmaṁ nidhanam śreyaḥ) towards the country.

Thus it is evident that with the decline of the Pratīhāras Madhyadeśa or Antarvedī needed a strong ruler to check the surging tides of Mlecchas. Candellas, Kalacuris and Paramāras were engaged in consolidation of their power in their respective zones viz., Bundelakhanda, Dakṣiṇa Kośala and Mālavā respectively. In trying to get their hold on Kānyakubja they fought among themselves. This mutual warfare among the defenders of the country sapped the vitality of our national forces and their federal outlook.

It was in this era of crisis that Candradeva appeared as the saviour of the people, who by his noble prowess suppressed all the troubles of his subjects (yenodāratara-pratāpa-śamitāśeṣa-prajopadravam). He destroyed the enemies and dispelled the darkness. He established his sovereignty over the kingdom of Kānyakubja which comprised the tīrthas of Kāśī, Kuśika (Kanauj) and Ayodhyā (Uttara-Kośalendra sthānīyakāni).¹ Thus in the personality of Candradeva, Antarvedi with all its sacred institutions

1. Chandravati Plate of Candradeva, ll. 3-5 :

तस्याभूत्तनयो नयैकरसिकः क्रांतद्विषन्मंडलो ।
विध्वस्तोद्धतधीरयोधतिमिरः श्रीचंद्रदेवो नृपः ।
येनोदारतरप्रतापशमिताशेषप्रजोपद्रवं ।
श्रीमद्गाधिपुराधिराज्यमसमं दोर्विक्रमेणार्जितं ॥
तीर्थानि काशिकुशिकोत्तरकोशलेन्द्र...
स्थानीयकानि परिपालयताभिगम्य यः ॥

As regards the names of tīrthas, Drs. Trpathi, Roma Niyogi and others take Indrasthāna as the name of Indraprastha or modern Delhi. But it appears to be Uttara-Kośalendra sthānīyaka i.e. the capital of the lord of Uttara-Kośala or the city of Rāma (Uttara-Kośalendra).

cf. Struggle For Empire, p. 52 ; History of the Gāhaḍavāla Dynasty, p. 46.

of history and polity (kṣātradharmā) was safe and secure. The Basahi inscription (V. S. 1161=1104 A. D.) clearly tells us that after the death of Bhoja and the destruction of Karna's fame, when the earth became distressed, king Candradeva acted as the saviour :

याते श्री भोजभूषे विबुधवरवधूनेत्रसोमातिथित्वम्

श्रीकर्णे कीर्तिशेषं गतवति च नृपे क्षमात्यये ।

भर्तारं यं धरित्री त्रिदिवविभुनिभं प्रीतियोगादुपेत ।

जाता विश्वस्यपूर्वम् समभवदिह स क्षमापतिश्च चन्द्रदेवः ॥¹

This Bhoja is to be identified with Bhoja-Ādivarāha the saviour of Āryāvarta. Like Bhoja, Candradeva was born to champion the cause of Vedic culture.

KĀŚIRĀJA CANDRADEVA

The Skanda Purāṇa refers to Kāśirāja Candradeva² along with the other great rulers of ancient India named Mucukunda (rājarṣi), Sagara, Vasuṣeṇa, Kakutstha and Aila who had set up their Liṅgas.³ Though the name of the dynasty of Candradeva is not mentioned here, yet the epithet Kāśirāja added to Candradeva leaves no doubt about his identification with the great Gāhaḍavāla ruler of the same name.

MANDAPĀLA

According to the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa Candradeva was succeeded by his son named Mandapāla,⁴ who is to be identified with Madanapāla or Madanacandra of the inscriptions.

The age of Mandapāla witnessed the rising tides of Muslim

1. Banaras Copper Plate Grant of Govindacandra, ll. 2-3.

2. Skanda, VI. 106. 6(ii).

3. Ibid., VI. 106. 5-6.

4. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisharga, IV. 3. 63 :

चन्द्रदेवस्तस्य सुतो राज्यं तेन पितुः समम् ॥

कृतं तस्मात्सुतो मंदपालो महीपतिः ॥

cf. T.H.K., p. 305 and Note 5, Sometimes called Madanadeva (Ind. Ant., XVIII, pp. 12, 14) or Madanacandra (Ep. Ind., IX, pp. 324, 327, V. 15).

invasions which were prelude to the coming deluge—the Turkish¹ conquest of India.

The reign of Mandapāla (or Madanacandra) was the beginning of the era of 'bhayānaka Mleccha-rājya' when the Turkish arms penetrated the heart of Āryāvarta and the Gāhaḍavāla ruler submitted to pay taxes to the Turkish ruler. The history of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty from Mandapāla to Jaicandra described in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, is a little confused in its details.

There are no references to Govindacandra and Vijayapāla (or Vijayacandra), son and successor of Govindacandra in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa.

JAYACANDRA

Like the Banaras Copper Plate Inscription of Govindacandra the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa also tells us that after the death of Bhoja (same as Bhoja I of the Pratihāra dynasty) there was no power strong enough to give protection to the country. There were many rulers (bahu-bhūpavatī bhūmis)². It was this age of decline during which Jayacandra had to rule over Antarvedī with Kānyakubja as his capital³.

According to the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa Jayacandra was the son of Devapāla through his wife Candrakānti, eldest daughter of Anaṅgapāla⁴. We are told that Vijayacandra was succeeded by his son Jayacandra whose mother was queen Candralekhā according to the Rambhāmañjarī⁵. Candrakānti of the Bhaviṣya P. and Candralekhā of Rambhāmañjarī are identical. Similarly, Devapāla of the Bhaviṣya P. and Vijayacandra appear to be identical names of the father of Jayacandra.

On the other hand, from the Jain work Prabandhakośa we learn that Jayantacandra (same as Jayacandra) was the son of

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1. Sarnath Inscription of Kumaradevi, l. 18.
 2. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, Pratisarga, III. 4. 1-2(i)
 3. Ibid., III. 4. 4(ii) :

अन्तर्वेद्यां कान्यकुब्जे जयचन्द्रोमहीपतिः ।

4. Ibid., III. 5. 1-6
5. THK., p. 320.

Govindacandra, king of Kāśī, who gave up his life according to the yogic way of Prāṇa-tyāga. After the death of Govindacandra, he was succeeded by Jayacandra.¹

The entire account of the achievements of Vijayacandra given by Dr. Tripathi is based on Pṛthvirāja-Rāso, and it seems to be doubtful.

The last inscription of Govindacandra was dated in V.S. 1211/1154 A.D. and the first inscription of his son and successor Vijayacandra, in V.S. 1224/1168 A.D. Vijayacandra's reign began c1155 A.D. He may have ruled for about fifteen years..... So far four inscriptions, dated during Vijayacandra's reign have been discovered. Of these, one was by a private individual and another by.....feudatory of Vijayacandra; the other two inscriptions were issued in the name of the king but the grants embodied therein were actually made by Mahārājaputra Yuvarāja Jayacandradeva. No inscription, recording the grant by the king himself, has been found. It is to be noted that these two official inscriptions are dated in the last two years of Vijayacandra's reign and the two unofficial inscriptions also are dated in his last year. Thus there is a period of thirteen years intervening between the date of the first inscription of this reign. The absence of any Gāhāḍavāla record relating to the period between 1154 A.D. and 1168 A.D. is rather unusual for the dynasty...and may indicate the possibility of an internal feud. It has already been noticed that Yuvarāja Āsphaṭacandradeva and Mahārājaputra Rajyapāladeva, two of the sons of Govindacandra, issued land-grants, one after another during the reign of their father, whose successor, however, was a third son Vijayacandra. This may point to fratricidal struggle....."²

1. Prabandhakośa, XI, Harṣakaviprabandha 64 (p. 54) :

पूर्वस्यां वाराणस्यां पुरि गोविन्दचन्द्रो नाम राजा ।
तत्पुत्रो जयन्तचन्द्रः । तस्मै राज्यं दत्त्वा
पिता योगं प्रपद्य परलोकमसाधयत् ।

Ibid., XX, 106, p. 88 :

वाराणस्यां गोविन्दचन्द्राख्य नृपपुत्रो जयन्तचन्द्रो राजा ।

2. H. G. D., pp. 90-91.

This crisis in the history of the Gāhaḍavālas, whether it was due to fratricidal feud or due to Muslim invasions, clearly reflects upon the personality of Vijayacandra as a nonentity, as is evident from the observations of the Jain writer who omits the name of Vijayacandra and makes Jayacandra son and successor of Govindacandra.

As pointed out above Vijayacandra is the same as Devapāla of the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa which mentions him as the father of Jayacandra.

But according to the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa Devapāla of Rāṣṭrapālānvaya (same as Raṭhor family) was the son of Mandapāla or Madanapāla. But we know that son of Madanapāla was Govindacandra.

JAYACANDRA—A GREAT CONQUEROR

Jayacandra, the famous king of Kānyakubja-deśa or Antarvedī was a powerful ruler (Jayacandra iti khyāto bāhuśālī jitendriyaḥ),¹ who conquered Gauḍa-Vaṅga and Marudeśa.² Harṣakavi-prabandha of Rājāśekhara also tells us that Jayantacandra conquered the earth as far as 700 Yojanas, as a result of which he was known as the 'king of 700 yojanas³ of land' (saptaśatayojanabhūnātho Jayantacandro).⁴ He is also mentioned to have besieged and conquered the capital of Gauḍa named Lakṣaṇāvati ruled by Lakṣaṇasena (same as Lakṣamaṇasena of the Sena dynasty).⁵ Thus undoubtedly Jayacandra was a powerful ruler, a great conqueror and patron of poets like Harṣa author of Naiṣadhīya Mahākāvya.⁶

JAYACANDRA—PRTHVIRĀJA STRUGGLE

The presence of two strong rulers viz, Jayacandra and Prthvirāja led to disunity and dissension among the two great rulers of

1. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga III. 5. 6(i)

2. Ibid., III. 5. 7.

3. Prabandhakośa, XI, Harṣakaviprabandha, p. 64 :

जयन्तचन्द्रः सप्तयोजनशतमानां पृथ्वीं जिगाय ।

cf. T.H.K., p. 322, note 3

4. Prabandhakośa, XXIV, Vastupāla-prabandha, 142, p. 117

5. Ibid., XX, pp. 88-90

6. Ibid., XI, p. 55

Āryadeśa. Anaṅgapāla, king of Indraprastha, had two daughters named Candrakānti and Kīrtimālīnī who were married respectively to Devapāla of Kānyakubja and Someśvara, the Cāhamāna ruler of Ajmer.¹

Someśvara and Kīrtimālīnī begot three sons viz., Dhundhukāra, Kṛṣṇakumāraka, and Pṛthivīrāja. Anaṅgapāla is stated to have abdicated in favour of his grandsons. He gave Indraprastha to Pṛthivīrāja; Dhundhukāra got Mathura and Kṛṣṇakumāraka got the possession of Ajmer.² Whatever may be the truth in these statements, but the possession of Dehalī (or Indraprastha) created the seeds of hostility³ among the two great rulers that led to the fall of the Rajputs.⁴

SAMYOGITĀ-SVAYAMVARA

The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa gives a detailed account of the svayamvara of Samyogitā, daughter of Jayacandra at Kānyakubjapura where Pṛthivīrāja was not invited (Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga, III. Chap. 6). The fight which took place between the forces of these two defenders of Āryādeśa further antagonised Jayacandra and Pṛthivīrāja. Their conflict on the eve of the Muslim conquest of India hastened the collapse of Hindu power which led to the foundation of 'bhayānaka rājya' or the rule of terror. Vastupāla-prabandha tells us :

सप्तशतयोजनभूनाथो जयन्तचन्द्रोऽपि क्षयं नीतः ।

विंशतिवारबद्धरुद्धसहाबदीनसुरत्नाणमोक्ता पृथिवीराजोऽपि बद्धः ।⁵

1. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga III. 5. 1-4

2. Ibid., III. 5. 10-12

3. Ibid., III. 5. 17-19, 28-35

4. Ibid., III. 5. 36-38 :

इति ज्ञात्वा तयोर्घोरं वैरं चासीन्महीतले ।

भूमिराजश्च बलवाञ्जयचन्द्र भयादितः ॥

जयचन्द्रश्च बलवान्पृथिवीराजभीरुकः ।

जयचन्द्रश्चार्यदेशमर्द्धराष्ट्रमकल्पयत् ॥

पृथिवीराज एवासी तदार्द्धं राष्ट्रमानयत् ।

एवं जातं तयोर्वैरमग्निवंशप्रणाशनम् ॥

cf. H.G.D., pp. 106-107.

5. Prabandha Kosa, XXIV, 142, p. 117.

CHAPTER XI

TURKISH CONQUEST OF INDIA AND ITS CAUSES

The rise of Islam in Arabia had far-reaching influence on the history of the neighbouring countries. India and Arabia had close commercial and cultural contacts even before this event. "The conversion of Arabs.....and their religious spirit being now thoroughly aroused, every feeling of their enthusiastic nature was turned into that one channel, to conquer in the cause of God, or to die in asserting his unity and greatness, was the longing wish of every Mussulmān ; the love of power or spoil, the thirst of glory, and even the hopes of Paradise, only contributed to swell the tide of this absorbing passion"¹. Elphinstone further adds : "The circumstances, both political and religious, of the neighbouring countries were such as to encourage the warmest hopes of these fanatical adventurers"².

The western sea-coast near Thānā (Mahārāshṭra) was invaded about 636 A. D³. (A. H. 15 or 16), when Pulakeśin II, the Chālukyan emperor was ruling over Deccan. But the invaders failed to get a foothold there. Again, the two successive discomfitures of the Muslim arms on the north-western gates of Sindh did not deter or dissuage the invaders who under the youthful vigour of Mohammad-bin-Qasim succeeded in the conquest of Sindh.

This collapse of the Indian powers is ascribed to the 'unpatriotic character of the Buddhists'⁴. Thus the apathy⁵ of the ruler and the ruled ruined the country.

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1. Elphinstone : History of India. p. 295.
 2. Ibid. p. 295.
 3. Ibid. p. 299, F. N. 20 vide Sir H. Elliot—Arabs in Sind.
 4. Classical Age, p. 175.
 5. Bharata Aur Araba Sambandha, p. 47.

“The Mahometan writers assert that Casim had begun to plan march to Canouj (Kanauj) on the Ganges, and an almost contemporary historian states that he had reached a place that seems to mean Oudipur (Udaipur)¹.....”. Elphinstone thinks that “It is inconceivable that he should have projected such an expedition”² But we have the unimpeachable evidence of inscriptions that the army of the Tājikas (Arabs) desired to enter Dakṣiṇā-patha (South India), after destroying the countries of Saindhava (Sindh). Kacchella (Cutch), Saurāṣṭra, Cāvotaka (Cāpas), Maurya (Moris of Ajmer) and Gurjara³. But they were badly defeated by Pulakeśin-Avanijanāśraya⁴. Nāga Bhaṭṭa I destroyed the armies of the Mleccha King⁵. who was none else than the Arab invader or the Tājika governor of Sindh mentioned above. Nāga Bhaṭṭa II is also stated to have conquered Sindh⁶ ruled by Turuṣka⁷; and again we are told that Rāma (Rāmabhadra) destroyed the armies of violent, terrible and merciless people devoted to sinful acts, and thus he proved to be the defender of the faith (trātā dharmasya)⁸. Bhoja, the greatest foe of the

1. Elp: H. I., p. 303 vide ‘Tarikh Hind-o-Sind’.

2. Ibid., p. 303.

3. C. I. I., Vol. IV, p. 138.

4. Ibid., p. 138.

5. H.M.H.I., Vol. II. p. 304

Gwalior Praśasti of Bhoja, verse 4 :

देवो नागभट्टः पुरातनमुनेर्मूर्तिर्बभूवादभुतं ।

येनासौ सुकृतप्रमाथिवलनम्लेच्छाघिपाक्षीहिणीः ।

6. Ibid., Verse 8 :

आद्यः पुमान्पुनरपि स्फुटकीतिरस्माज्जातस् एव किल नागभट्टस्तदाख्यः ।

यत्नान्ध्रसैन्धवविदर्भकलिगभूपैः । कौमारधामनि पतंगसमैरपाति ॥

7. Ibid., Verse 11 : निर्जित्य...

आनर्त्तमालवकिराततुरुष्कवत्स ॥

8. Ibid., Verse 12 : राम नामा...प्रसभमधिपतीनुद्धतकूरसत्त्वान् ।

पापाचारान्तरायप्रमथनरुचिरः सगंतः कीर्तिदारै—

स्त्राता धर्मस्य...॥

Mlecchas, also taught a good lesson with his weapons, to the Asuras¹. Thus we see that there was a continuous, uninterrupted, stiff, as well as successful, resistance to the armies of the Tājikas, Turuṣkas and Mlecchas. The terror of Arab conquest stirred the country and hence, the forces of national integration overpowered those of disruption and disintegration. However, it was due to the political consciousness and love of the country (svadeśarāga)² with devotion to Dharma, that the world-conquerors failed and the conquest of Sindh proved to be a mere episode in the history of India.

Now came the turn of Kabul and Kāśmīra to face the Turkish avalanche, but Kāśmīrian politics, with the treachery of ministers and feudatories, caused havoc. Some of the women, who entered the palaces, must have belonged to the neighbouring tribes of Khasas and Daradas, converted to Islam. Rājatarṅgiṇī of Kalhaṇa, Jonarāja and Śrīvara Paṇḍita etc. assert that the political anarchy, along with 'bhikṣu-viplava' went a great way in the fall of the frontiers. Śāhī rulers did fight with utmost valour, but despite all their sacrifices and combinations and confederations, they failed in their struggle against the Muslims. The great writers of Kāśmīra did their best to arouse the spirit of patriotism and unity in the minds of people, but in vain. The clouds of terror and tyranny gathered so dense that it appeared, verily, a dark night of distress (rajanī parābhavaṃ)³. The north-western India was then occupied by the Ghazanavides and Ghoris. Bhārateśvara Pṛthvirāja Cauhaṇ (III), who had taken a vow to destroy the Mlecchas, failed, due to the short-sightedness of his minister, who checked the Chāhamāna current of vigour from joining the Chālukyan channel, against the 'lobhāṇḍha' Ghori. His failure led to the foundation of Muslim rule in India. The revolts and resistance continued, but the collapse of Ancient India was complete.

1. Ibid. verse 23 :

यः शशासामुराण्वोरास्त्रैणेनास्त्रैकवृत्तिना ॥

2. SK. P. ; III. ii. 76.47 ; K. S. S., LVII. 189.

3. Pṛthivirāja Vijaya, II. 17.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the distinguished historian, discussed the Turkish conquest of India¹. He says:— "The astounding rapidity of the Turkish conquest constitutes an important problem for the students of Indian history. It is puzzling, nay almost baffling, to explain the almost complete collapse of northern India, within an incredibly short time, before the onslaught of invaders whose power and resources were hardly equal to those of some of the bigger states.....It is natural that men should seek to solve the mystery and find out the real causes that lay behind the great political catastrophe, that overwhelmed India. History would be meaningless if facts of such outstanding importance cannot be viewed in their proper perspective against a proper background. It is no wonder, therefore, that various speculations have been made and diverse solutions offered to the problem."¹

The problem has been discussed by R. C. Dutta, R. C. Majumdar, K. M. Panikkar, A. L. Srivastava, Dasharatha Sharma and others. R. C. Majumdar and U. N. Ghoshal have removed much of the mist and haze that gathered round the fall of the Hindu power. But, so far, no attempt has been made to examine the problem in the light of information gleaned from indigenous literature—the original sources.

The Skanda Purāṇa seems to be the most important source, as it discusses, or aims to discuss, the problem with the seriousness of a modern Parliament. The sages, assembled in a sabhā were very keen to find out the causes that led to the occupation of the country by the Mleccha².

Though we do not find an answer to it at this place, yet the Skanda evinces a great interest into the enquiry of the causes that led to the foundation of Muslim rule in India. It asserts that the internecine warfare among the Kṣatriya rulers³ of the age proved to be the main factor which led to the collapse of Hindu power.

There were many causes responsible for the internecine

1. Majumdar, R. C. ; Struggle For Empire, p. 125.

2. Sk., V. iii. 5. 14.

3. Ibid., VII. iii. II. 22 :

तत्र अन्योन्यं महीपाला युयुर्वसुघातले ॥

warfare, viz. :—

(i) Kṣātra dharma—Kṣatriya's principal duty was to fight and they stuck to it¹.

(ii) They also fought for political supremacy (rājyārthe)².

The Rājput rulers inspired by the Kṣātradharma aspired for political supremacy, and this ideal of 'digvijaya' went a great way in causing perpetual wars among the Hindu rulers of early medieval India.

It is true that they realised the importance of one sole monarch as the ruler of the entire country (Sārvabhaumo mahī-patiḥ)³. The ideal of 'Sārvabhauma rājya' was an old one, which inspired the Kṣatriya rulers to strive for the attainment of the status of a sovereign (cakravartī)⁴. The political thinkers of the age also asserted that a sārva-bhauma ruler controls the entire country⁵, and thereby directs the destiny of the people to fulfil their aspirations. Thus, the aspirations of the Kṣatriya rulers for the attainment of 'Cakravartī-pada' also resulted in perpetual warfare from the very dawn of our history. We hold that "the old imperial ideal was still such a living force as to prompt the leading Indian rulers frequently to make a bold bid for empire in the traditional fashion. The political history of the period, accordingly, is one of almost unceasing struggle between a few powerful states for supremacy"⁶.....Mañjuśrī Mūla Kalpa, a Buddhist text of mediaeval times, also asserts the warring nature of Hindu monarchy⁷.

1. Sk., III. iii. 17. 11 : क्षात्रधर्मरतः सदा ।

Ibid., V. iii. 53. 5 : स्वधर्मनिरतश्चैव युद्धतिथ्यप्रियः सदा ।

क्षान्नधर्मं समाश्रित्य भोगान्भुङ्क्ते स कामतः ॥

2. Ibid., III. i. 31. 4 : राज्यार्थे कलहे जाते ।

3. Ibid., V. i. 35. 6.

4. Ibid., II. ii. 40. 22.

5. Ibid., II. ii. 44. 35.

6. St., Ind. Hist., p. 508.

7. M. M. K., p. 275 : सर्वे नृपतयस्तत्र परस्पर विरोधिनः ।

संग्रामशालिनः सर्वे भवन्ते नात्र संशयः ॥

III. FEUDALISM.

"The real weakness of the Indian administration lay in the influence of the great feudatory families whose power and ambition constituted a perpetual threat to the stability of the central government"¹. Feudalism had always been a threat to monarchy both in India and outside. European annals also portray it as a gigantic monster waiting in ambush for the decline of the central power. The political system of the early Medieval India was marked by the development of two main ideas, and these are clearly noticed in the Skanda Purāṇa. The first was the feudal idea which pervaded the whole political firmament of the age under review. The other was the conception of Imperialism.

Sāmanta played an important part in the court and kingdom, along with the other state functionaries, viz., Amātya, etc². The kingdoms were divided into provinces called deśas³, or maṇḍalas⁴, ruled by Māṇḍalikas⁵, who styled themselves 'Rājās'. They were also known as governors (goptā), or Daṇḍanāyaka⁶ (military governor). These Maṇḍaleśvaras were also helped in their administration by the ministers, for a king summoned to court maṇḍaleśvaras along with their ministers (sāmātyān maṇḍaleśvarān)⁷.

These feudatories were tributary kings (karadikṛta-pārthivāḥ) who would not pay even their tributes without fighting⁸. Thus they could be kept under control only through the force of arms. They were always on the look-out for the weaknesses of the central authority. The decline of the Pratihāras was hastened by the rise of Candellas and other feudal powers.

1. St. In Ind. Hist., p. 510.

2. Sk., II. ii. 11. 77.

3. S. Ins., p. 301 (Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skanda Gupta).

4. Sk., III. ii. 33. 38.

5. Ibid., III. ii. 31. 52; III. ii. 33. 38; V. iii. 53. 9; VI. 271. 451.

6. Ibid., IV. i. 32. 64.

7. Ibid., IV. ii. 58. 4.

8. Ibid., VI. 48. 43 : सर्वे स्तै जायते यज्ञः पार्थिवैः करदीकृतैः ।

युद्धं बिना करं तेषां न यच्छन्ति यतो विभो ।

The Skanda Purāṇa mentions several instances of feudal lords trying to assert their independence. In one case a Sāmanta usurped his empire¹. Similarly taking advantage of the weak king deprived of treasury, his capital was besieged by the hostile kings, who thought it the most opportune time for the conquest of his kingdom. They defeated him². There is another story which tells us that when king Satyārtha of Vidarbha was engaged in Śiva-worship in a temple of the capital, he heard a great noise in the city. He left the temple and went out for the security of the capital. In the meanwhile his valorous minister had brought the enemy, who had invaded the capital, in chains. The king ordered the hostile feudatory to be beheaded³. Thus, we see that there were different forces which induced the ambitious feudatories to get rid of the Imperial control. Particularly when a minor king came to govern the destiny of the country and people, there began a harvest of upheavals for 'rājya-viplava'⁴. The history of Mūlarāja II Chālukya furnishes an interesting example, for we find that the feudatories and hostile relations, taking advantage of the minority of the ruler, created troubles in his kingdom. Paramāras, too, attacked the kingdom when Mohammad Ghori was planning an invasion of the Chālukyan dominion. Again the number of these subordinate rulers was also large⁵ and consequently unmanageable.

IV. POLITICAL RITUALS.

We also learn from the Skanda Purāṇa that the performance of

1. Sk. VII. i. 166. 26. आर्यस्य बालपुत्रस्य राज्यं सामन्तेन हृतं ।

2. Ibid., II. vii. 15. 7-8 : बलहीनं नृपं ज्ञात्वा कोशराष्ट्रविर्जितम् ॥

तं जेतुमेष समय निश्चितमानसाः ॥

आजग्मुः शतशो भूपा रिपवस्तस्य भूपतेः ॥

जिग्ययुद्धेन तं भूपं...॥

3. Ibid., III. iii. 6. 63-66.

4. Ibid., VI. 46. 9.

5. Sk., V. ii. 22. 6 : नृपो नृपसहस्रेण (राजितः)

Ibid. VII. iv. 10. 5 : अनेक शतसाहस्रा भूमिपा अपि तद्वशाः ॥

such political rituals as 'Rājasūya, 'Aśvamedha and Vājapeya, which were in vogue from the earliest times of our political evolution, also caused wars of aggrandisement. The great epic war ensued from the jealousy of Duryodhana who envied the imperial status of Yudhiṣṭhira. Moreover, Rājasūya or Aśvamedha presupposed 'World-conquest' (digvijaya). The very idea of war shook the spirit of the pacifist Yudhiṣṭhira who was inspired by his advisers like Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna to strive for the attainment of the imperial status¹. Skanda refers to an instance when a ruler who aspired to perform Rājasūya was dissuaded by his ministers and allies to drop the idea², as the performance of the Yajña depended on the help of the tributary kings³. The entire enterprise entailed fighting, hence the well-wishers asked the king to desist from such a policy⁴ which was, as is now apparent, suicidal to the king and the country alike.

"The Rāso alleges that after the conclusion of his conquests Jayacandra prepared to celebrate the Rājasūya Yajña as a mark of universal monarchy, which was to culminate in the Svayamvara of Saṃyogitā. Invitations were sent to all the princes to attend the ceremony, but Pṛthivīrāja Cauhāna and Samarasimha of Mewar refused to come. Jayacandra caused effigies of them to be made of gold, and in order to humiliate them placed these representations in a position that indicated low rank. Pṛthivīrāja took the insult to heart; he suddenly attacked Kanauj and carried away the not-unwilling princess. Canda holds that this friction between Jayacandra and Pṛthivīrāja was the cause that led to Śihābuddīn Ghori's invasion resulting in the fall of both"⁵. Skanda's statements recorded above tend to

1. Mbh., Sabhā P., Chaps., XIV, XV, XVI.

2. Sk., VI. 48. 42 :

राजसूयकृतेऽस्माकं सदा बुद्धिः प्रवर्तते ॥

निषेधयन्ति मां सर्वे मन्त्रिणः सुहृदस्तथा ॥

3. Ibid., VI. 48. 43(i).

4. Ibid. VI. 48. 44 : ततो युद्धार्थिनं मां ते वारयन्ति हितेषिणः ॥

5. Tripathi, History of Kanauj, pp. 325-326.

support indirectly the account of Rāso with emphasis on the defects of such political rituals.

Skanda fully supports Canda when it asserts that truly rājya (yuktametat yadasmākam rājyam) has been occupied by the asuras (grihyet cāsuraḥ)¹ because of our vicious conduct (durāchārān), suicidal wars (ātmadroha parāyaṇān), and stupidity (mauḍhyam)². Skanda asserts that our collapse came because of our animal passion (paśubuddhi)³ and so stupefied and agitated by the amorous nature (vibhrāmitā mūḍhā) they came to svayaṁvara (samāyātāḥ svayaṁvaram)⁴.

Dr. Dasharath Sharma asserts, "We, of course, have every right to examine the truth of an old tradition.....There is nothing illogical or irrational about it. Nor does it go against any known historical facts"⁵. Moreover, we know that the performance of Aśvamedha depended solely on the conquest of the four quarters. Hence the contemporary thinkers did not approve it, because it was a cause of 'anyonya vaira', 'kalaha' and 'vivāda'⁶.

V. NARROW OUTLOOK

It is evident that there were many states in the country fighting among themselves⁷. This plurality of states created a narrow outlook in the minds of the rulers who consequently overlooked their main responsibility—the defence of dharā and dharma. It was further aggravated by a large number of religious sects, none of which rose equal to the occasion by consolidat-

1. Sk., I. ii. 25. 117.

2. Ibid., I. ii. 25. 116.

3. Ibid., I. ii. 25. 118 : येषामेवं विधा बुद्धिरस्माभिः किं कृतं त्विदम् ॥

अथ वा नो दोषोऽस्ति पशवो हि वयं ततः ॥

4. Ibid., I. ii. 25. 120.

5. Early Chauhāna Dynasties (Delhi, 1959), p. 99.

6. Sk., I. ii. 29. 206, 207.

7. Ibid., VII. iii. 10. 22(i) : तत्र अन्योन्यं महीपाला युयुधुर्वमुधातले ॥

ing and stabilising the country, so weak and divided¹.

This political catastrophe (rājya-viplava)² caused by 'kalaha'³ led to the weakening of the country⁴. It was largely due to the inherent weakness of the political system then in vogue in the country. The well-being of a country and its people depended upon the conduct of a ruler⁵. The political thinkers of that age were themselves not unaware of the coming deluge. It became apparent that the Mlecchas could not be checked by the Hindu powers (mlecchāstasyāvidheyāśca)⁶. It was felt, that it was very difficult to overpower the Mleccha (durnivāryo) because of our carelessness (acetanaḥ)⁷. The imminent advent of the Muslim rule was prophesied⁸. This was an alarm bell. Thus Skanda shows that the country did not lack political consciousness.

Skanda Purāṇa, further, tells us that in the country, then full of Mlecchas, Lumpādhipa, the ruler of Lumpa (Lampāka or Lamghana), equal to Mahendra in valour, had become the king⁹. He had, in his army, thousands of Mlecchas, Tuṣāras (Tukhāras, the Tocharians), Barbaras or Daradas (the wild people of

1. Sk., II. ii. 47. 6 : धर्मस्यपन्था गहनः संकीर्णो बहुशासनैः ।

तत्त्वाधारणे नास्य क्षमः कोऽपिद्विजोत्तमः ॥

Buddhist apathy for Brāhmaṇa ruler of Sind led to the conquest of that country by the Arabs. Hence Kumārila launched a violent attack on Buddhism. But Śāṅkara synthesised it with the other shades of Hindu thought.

2. Ibid., VI. 46. 9.

3. Ibid. III. i. 31. 10.

4. Ibid., VI. 46. 9 :

राज्य विप्लवमध्यगात् कृत्स्नं धरापृष्ठं शून्यतां समुपस्थितम् ॥

5. Ibid., V. ii. 23. 2 : राजमूला महादेवि योगक्षेमाः सुवृष्टयः ॥

6. Ibid., V. iii. 97. 22 : प्रजाश्च व्याधयश्चैवमरणं च भयानि ॥

7. Ibid., V. iii. 28. 69 : म्लेच्छो दुर्निवार्यो ह्यचेतनः ॥

8. Ibid., VII. iv. 4. 46 : म्लेच्छप्रायाश्च भूपाला भविष्यन्ति च ॥

9. Ibid., V. ii. 41. 2 : देशे म्लेच्छगणाकीर्णे बभूव जगतीपतिः ।

लुपाधिप इति ख्यातो महेन्द्रसमविक्रमः ॥

Dardistan), Lumpas (the inhabitants of Lampāka-Lamghana) Pahlavas (Pahlavas, Persians-Pāradas), and Śvagaṇas, (Sogdians), etc, Though Lumpādhīpa's identity is concealed in the mythological lore, yet we can surmise that he represents either Mahmud of Ghazni or Mohammad of Ghor, both of whom were the 'lords of the region' around Lamghan inhabited by the martial tribes mentioned above. "The Sultani-Ghāzi (Mohammad Ghori) was the Haider of the time and a second Rustam according to Ṭabkate-Nasiri"². Thus he seems to be identical with Lumpādhīpa styled 'Mahendra-sama-vikramah'.

Skanda Purāṇa gives us a reliable account of the Turkish conquest of India. The Hindu powers had collapsed, but they were not reconciled to alien domination and an era of prolonged resistance commences. It shows the spirit of patriotism (svadeśa-rāga)³ i. e. the love of one's own country. The Kathāsaritasāgara asserts that one's native land is exceedingly dear to living beings, even though it may be an inferior place⁴.

The love of the country made it imperative to our thinkers to discuss the national problem. Skanda Purāṇa asserts that 'the wise people should deliberate upon the problem, for it leads to knowledge which brings about deliverance⁵. It is for this reason that 'prajāñā' and 'udyama' or 'upāya', were acknowledged as the

1. Sk., V. ii. 41. 2 : ततः स प्रस्थितो राजा म्लेच्छैः साद्वं सहस्रशः ॥

गुणारैः बर्बरैः (दरदैः) लुपैः पल्लवैः श्वगणैस्तथा ॥

2. Ray, Dynastic History of N. I., Vol. II. p. 1088.

3. Sk., IV. ii. 76. 47.

4. K.S.S., LII. 189 : प्राणिनां हि निकृष्टापि जन्मभूमिः पराप्रिया ॥

5. Sk., I. i. 9. 44 : तस्माद्विमर्शः कर्तव्यः पुरुषेण विपश्चिता ।

विमर्शज्जायते ज्ञानं ज्ञानान्मोक्षो भविष्यति ॥

Here vimarśa, jñāna and mokṣa should not be interpreted in the sense of religious bliss. Indra lost his kingdom to Indrasena who conquered him by force of arms. It is thus in this context that Mokṣa or deliverance indicates the recovery of kingdom and freedom from political bondage, so lost by Indra, the king of the Suras (gods).

most important and effective weapons which could bring freedom to the country. With this faith, Skanda Purāṇa discusses as to how this sacred country had been occupied by the Muslims. This question was discussed in an assembly of sages presided over by Mārkaṇḍeya¹. The Purāṇa asserts that the internecine warfare, caused by the different forces mentioned above, proved to be the greatest defect in the political system of the country and for which it had to pay dearly. It further asserts that the disputes among the Kṣatriyas were definitely unprofitable (vighraho hi nirarthakaḥ)² and reminds them of ancient times when all the Kṣatriyas, after having elected one sole monarch, enjoyed the blessings of the earth by faithfully following his directions with devotion and duty³. Thus Skanda Purāṇa evinces the existence of political consciousness and patriotism which gave stimulus to the foundation of a strong and a united state in the country. This measure alone could have saved the country from the collapse. We know that the confederacies were formed, but the chief leader of the union was not obeyed and respected by the confederating units with loyalty and devotion.

Thus, it is evident that mutual quarrels and jealousy were the main factors which brought about the collapse of Indian powers (vairam deśopaghātakam)⁴; but women (nārī caritra viplava)⁵ or lust (kāmarāga)⁶ and bad policy and counsel (durmantra)⁷ also contributed to it. Political thinkers of the age, like faithful rāṣṭra-vaidyas, diagnosed the body-politic and suggested various remedies for the recovery of the nation. The first and the foremost

1. Sk., V. iii. 5. 14 : कथं म्लेच्छ समाकीर्णो देशोऽयं द्विजसत्तम ॥

एतदाचक्ष्व मां ब्रह्मन् मार्कण्डेय महामते ॥

2. Ibid., I. i. 9. 42.

3. Ibid., VI. 24. 24 : क्षत्रियाश्चापि भूपालमेकं कृत्वा सुभक्तितः ॥
तदादेनात् प्रभुं जन्ति महीं धर्मेण नित्यशः ॥

4. R. T.; VII. 401.

5. Ibid., VII. 425 to 430, 1145, 1146.

6. Ibid., VIII. 3018.

7. Ibid., VIII. 2067.

desideratum was, as stated above, the political unity among the Kṣatriya rulers.

These thinkers¹ also suggested vital changes in domestic and foreign policies. They advised the authorities to rule over their people with self-control, without causing harassment and persecution to them through taxation or punishment². Special stress was laid on the policy of liberalism and toleration; but the enemies were to be dealt with a strong iron hand. They were to be completely destroyed without showing any leniency or mercy to them³. It is true that no one can rest in peace in the face of powerful hostile powers. If he is so negligent towards them, his fate is doomed⁴. Bhāratesvara Pṛthivīrāja III, himself, stands charged with this negligence :

वैरिणा सह सन्धाय विश्वस्तो यदि तिष्ठति ।

स वृक्षाग्रे प्रसुप्तो हि पतितः प्रतिबुध्यते ॥⁵

He, who rests confident after having made a reconciliation with his enemy, is sure to fall one day like a man who sleeps on a tree-top. Pṛthivīrāja III did the same thing after making treaty with Mohammad Ghori. Hence his fall was inevitable. His fall marked the end of the Hindu sovereignty and thus began an era of terror caused by the Mlecchas (mleccha-rājye bhayānake)⁶.

1. Skanda Purāṇa gives us a list of 36 duties of kings as given in the Mahābhārata but with a great change dictated by the exigencies and urgencies of the age. (Skanda Purāṇa VII. iv. 17. 80 to 94; Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Chap. 70, Gita Press Edn.).

2. Sk., VII. iv. 17. 85 to 92.

3. Sk., VII. iv. 17. 93, 94 : प्रहरेन्न च विप्राय हत्वा शत्रून् शेषयेत् ।
क्रोधं कुर्यान्न चाकस्मान्मृदुः स्यान्नापकारिषु ॥
एवं राज्यं चिरं स्थेयं यदि श्रेय इहेच्छसि ॥

4. Śiśupālavadha, II. 42 : विधाय वैरं सामर्षं नरोऽरौ य उदासते ।
प्रक्षिप्योदचिषं कक्षे शेरते तेऽभिमारुतम् ॥

5. Garuḍa P., I. 114. 48.

6. Bhaviṣya P., Pratisarga IV. 3. 79.

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